

Values and the curriculum: economics and business education at different stages in the development of young people.

David Robert Lines,

Institute of Education, University of London,

Submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

March 1999.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the writing of a thesis, many people make considerable and significant contributions. High on my list are my two supervisors, David Lambert and Denis Lawton. Both have been wholly supportive and encouraging, but never less than fastidious; a casual phrase or ill-considered assertion has always been challenged. As a result of their efforts, the process of writing has become a learning experience in and of itself.

Jacek Brant and Adam Unwin, my two colleagues in the Business and Economics section at the Institute of Education, have been outstanding in their support as well as forgiving of my administrative frailties whilst my mind has been, apparently, elsewhere. Other friends and colleagues at the Institute who have influenced this work deserve mention and thanks, especially Dr. Ashley Kent, my Head of Group, Dr. David Whitehead and David Dyer, the latter two luminaries of economics and business education, both now retired but still remembered. On a more practical level, Magdalen Meade deserves thanks for her work on the more difficult word-processing of the diagrams contained in the Nuffield chapters.

Beyond the Institute, Alison Wood and Sean Vertigan have made considerable contributions to the chapters on thinking skills and the 'New Economics', whilst Stephen Barnes, amongst my co-directors in the Nuffield Project, merits a particular reference for the way he has prompted my thinking over the years.

Finally, two people deserve special mention. One is my father who, having been forced to leave school at fourteen, was determined such an event should never happen to me. Now well into his eighties, he has never stopped reading and thinking; he is truly a lifelong learner.

Jill Turner's contribution to this work is hard to describe without an excess of superlatives. She is my wife and partner, in every sense. Without her intellectual and practical support, her willingness to listen, challenge ideas and contribute her own, find the time and energy to shop, cook and clean whilst simultaneously continuing her career and fighting a serious and debilitating illness, this work would not have reached fruition. For her assistance with this, as with so many other aspects of my life, I offer her my deepest, most affectionate thanks.

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an account of curriculum initiatives in the related fields of economics and business education between the years 1982 to 1998. These developments are placed in the context of a national curriculum for schools in England and Wales, rapid changes in the post-16 education and training environment and alterations in working practices brought about by the information and communication revolution.

The work employs a pluralist methodology based on fitness for purpose. Thus, the national scene largely relies on documentary sources, whilst the case studies are examined through the use of interviews and questionnaires as well as secondary data. In one example the author is a participant observer. The central theme is the relationship between business education curricula and values: the account of curriculum developments are subject to analysis both of the values that have underpinned or guided their contents and the contribution that their configurations of business education can make to values education. It introduces the notion of 'congruence' in curriculum development, a term used to describe the interface between curriculum, values and the development of young people.

The thesis is in the most part an original contribution to the study of curriculum and curriculum development. In identifying the key concept, 'values', and analysing the degree of 'congruence' achieved by curriculum developers, the thesis is able to contribute to the literature on values education and the development of young people. In particular, the final chapter shows the potential of business education to promote in young people an understanding that values underpin and help to explain the workings of the economic world.

The main conclusions are two-fold. First, that value positions underpin curriculum developments but that they are not always made explicit, even in subjects dealing with business and economic systems. Second, that business education curricula need to demonstrate more overtly their role in encouraging the critique of values alongside more fact based enquiry. The research shows that development of young people is only considered as a by-product of other aims and objectives, which results in a missed opportunity. The holistic perspective examining the intellectual and emotional needs of a 'complete' student and what this means at various stages of the educational process (from 14 years-old), is rarely considered when curriculum change is contemplated.

CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	1
Acknowledgements	2
Abstract	3
Contents Pages	4
List of Figures	5
List of Tables	6
Part 1: Setting The Scene	
1: Introduction	8
2: Methodology	26
Part 2: Curriculum Initiatives	
3: The National Curriculum: Its Origins and Values	40
4: A Key Stage 4 Initiative: The Business and Information Studies Project	77
5: The Nuffield Economics and Business Project	109
6: The General National Vocational Qualification in Business	141
7: Values and a Vocational Qualification: Becoming a Chartered Accountant	179
Part 3: Directions For The Future	
8: Thinking Skills: Improving the Critique of Business	204
9: Changing the Values base: Towards a 'New Economics'	220
10: Conclusion	239
Bibliography	258
Appendices	
1: The Cambridge Business Studies Trust: Its Origins and Values	292
2: The Nuffield Economics and Business Project: A Chronology	302
3: GCE A-Level Economics and Business Studies Entries, 1956-1985	336

LIST OF FIGURES

Number	Title	Page
1.1	A representation of the notion of 'congruence' in the process of curriculum development.	15
3.1	The relationship between age and levels of attainment.	64
4.1	GCSE Candidate entries 1989 - 1998.	81
4.2	GCE Candidate entries 1989 - 1998.	82
4.3	GCSE Business Studies and BIS candidate entries 1989 - 1998.	95
4.4	GCE A-level Business Studies and BIS candidate entries 1991 - 1998.	99
5.1	The Nuffield Economics and Business A-level Course Structure.	122
5.2	The use of concept blocks in the teaching of economics.	124
5.3	The Nuffield 'spiral curriculum'.	125
6.1	GNVQ Advanced Business and Total GNVQ Advanced registrations 1992 - 1998.	150
6.2	A continuum of qualifications.	169
10.1	Four Strategies for Values Education	250
A2.1	Course Structure proposal, September to November 1991.	313
A2.2	Course Structure proposal, December 1991.	315
A2.3	Stephen Barnes's notion of a modular framework, December 1991.	316
A2.4	Course Structure proposal, April 1992.	318
A2.5	Barnes's Structure diagram May 1992. Originally hand-drawn.	320
A2.6	Structure diagram September 1992.	321
A2.7	Structure diagram November 1992.	322

LIST OF TABLES

Number	Title	Page
2.1	Applied Research: summary of principle data collection methods.	33
4.1	Percentage of Secondary Students' Time Spent Studying Economics & Business Studies.	80
4.2	The Different Profiles of Economics & Business Studies teachers in English and Welsh Schools.	83
5.1	Nuffield A-level Candidate entry numbers 1996 - 1998.	121
6.1	Participation (%) of 16-18 year olds in education and training.	143
6.2	A Comparison between UCLES syllabus 0961 and the pre-1995 GNVQ Business Specification.	165
10.1	A Selection of business and economics topics offering possibilities for deeper, more 'careful' analysis	252

Part 1: Setting The Scene

Part one consists of two chapters. The first, the introduction, sets the scene for the entire work. In particular it examines the construction of the thesis from a strategic perspective. The second focuses on methodology, examining alternative methods and concluding that no single technique was appropriate, let alone possible for the research problem defined herein. Opportunities available to the researcher, as well as issues of data access varied over the considerable time occupied by the work and the case is put for the pluralist approach adopted, based on the principle of fitness for purpose.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how this thesis developed from a research interest that was generated and crystallised over a period of years teaching economics and business. In essence it concerns the interaction between values and the developing young person within the context of the upper secondary curriculum. The chapter goes on to define key terms that will be used throughout the thesis and introduces the idea of 'congruence' to describe the interconnectedness between those key terms. The chapter then moves to a brief description of the ways parts two and three illuminate the research questions, with the aim of informing curriculum development in the future. Finally, there is a brief historical outline of the context of economics and business education in England and Wales.

1.2 The Research Problem

What is it that drives the researcher? Slater (1996) describes it thus:

"People come to undertake a piece of research out of something contained within their own experience, an experience which then becomes particularly focused and organised in an explicit way. It is about a process of searching and re-searching experience which is usually thought to be rather outside ourselves, though paradoxically it has at least to be part of ourselves, our experience and observation if we are to identify it as a 'problem' to be researched."

(Slater 1996: 292)

So it is with me. A career in industry followed by twenty five years of teaching and examining economics and business in various forms, at various levels and in a variety of institutions has prompted, some might say belatedly, the identification of my research 'problem'.

Like many new teachers I entered the teaching profession with the desire to be a positive influence on the lives of young people. From the start, therefore, values were

of considerable importance to me and to my teaching. I sought a classroom environment where value positions could be challenged, modified or reinforced, at the same time recognising the tensions created by the autonomy of the individual to determine his or her own values on the one hand, and the requirements of a pluralist society on the other. Important though this was, of necessity through the early years practicalities dominated - the exigencies of classroom control leave little space for much else. Nevertheless even then, teaching economics and business studies to lively, often highly intelligent young people, raised questions about what the ultimate aim of the learning experience was: it could not simply be the acquisition of technical knowledge, although that was clearly important. Perhaps it was precisely because of these particular students' abilities, but also through my growing confidence, that I was progressively able to explore beyond theoretical exposition of the subject matter to the values that underpinned it. At the same time it was also interesting to watch how, as A-level candidates, these students changed in their thinking from their time spent learning similar material for O-level. *Their* values rarely seemed to shift fundamentally over the period, nevertheless as they matured so did their ability to process and sift information; not always to my liking I have to say, but in a way that increasingly displayed logical consistency rather than parental, societal or peer group pressure, though all three remained in evidence.

At the same time as teaching, I was developing a quasi-career in external examining, motivated by a mixture of financial imperatives and the same desire to influence young people's thinking. By the mid-1980s I was setting questions for A-level Business Studies that challenged candidates to explore ethical and environmental issues; conscious that by asking them I was influencing teachers and the teaching of the subject, as well as the students themselves. The faint glimmerings of the importance of values that began in my own classroom were becoming brighter, but I had little space to explore the subject in depth until two events happily coincided. One was the award of a sabbatical to study for a Masters degree and the second was my appointment as a lecturer in Business Education and Assistant Director of the Cambridge Business Studies Trust, all based at the Institute of Education. Taken together these required me not only to study the fundamental constructs of economics and business education but also to articulate them to beginning teachers of those subjects.

Later on I reached a wider audience still when I became a co-director of the Nuffield Economics and Business Project (see chapter five). As a curriculum developer I was confronted with the reality of translating theoretical issues into the design and writing of text-books, the re-training of teachers, writing examination syllabuses and so on.

The juxtaposition of theory and practice that the Nuffield Project represented was instructive, because it forced me to realise that compromise must be reached in order to achieve concrete outcomes; but equally that those outcomes would fundamentally be affected by the level and intensity of the theoretical debate that precedes them.

The experience with the Nuffield Project enabled me to cast a more critical eye on other curriculum developments, and in 1997 I was given the opportunity by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) to research into their curriculum and examination system, in order to explore reasons for the waning popularity of chartered accountancy as a business qualification. Here, I was working with people who were well beyond the age of compulsory schooling, were virtually all post-graduates, and had volunteered to face further demanding examinations whilst working full-time. What were their values, I wondered, and what were the values projected by the ICAEW's examination? The trainees had successful educational careers behind them. To what extent was that experience taken into account and embedded in the system?

Thus questions were forming in my mind for many years but only recently have I had the opportunity to articulate and explore them in depth. The first concerns values; to what extent is their importance to society considered in the curriculum? The second, about the growing maturity of young people; to what extent do we take it into account as we select and organise the curriculum for young people through to adulthood (although this is not a psychological study)? The third, about the way values and the young person's developing maturity interact; if they do, how do they and what is their relative importance and weighting? These issues may seem esoteric, but I believe them to be fundamental to curriculum design. I do not deny that curriculum initiatives *can* be constructed by trial and error, but work that fails to address these issues and is thus under-theorised will, I contend, prove unsatisfactory and will require constant modification and adjustment. If I am right, then my hope is that this work will inform curriculum development in the future, at a moment when the curriculum for the year 2000 and beyond is subject to intense discussion and debate. It is apposite in another way, too, as manifested in an increased awareness of the need to consider values in our changing society. As Sir Ron Dearing says in the context of the debate over the future direction of higher education:

"....I talked of the debate about teaching, learning and the need to address current uncertainties. I found the greatest uncertainty over the issue of values....It was an issue the Committee of Inquiry debated long and hard because, with the changes in our society since

the Robbins report, the development of a multi-cultural and multi-racial society, there is less confidence about values."

(Dearing, 1998: 9)

1.3 Research Conventions

Because of the way it has developed, this dissertation is somewhat different from the conventional. It is in parts historical, but I make no claims in terms of historical research. It is also a distillation of personal and professional experience and reflection, which for the researcher carries the danger of partiality. Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging that my background carries the potential risk of 'objective' evidence being contaminated by anecdote, rhetoric and opinion, it also provides unique perspectives. In any case, a similar challenge must face all researchers who have to sift evidence and form judgements based on incomplete knowledge (Evans, 1997: 46). We all bring our values to research but without it necessarily being, as here, so apparent, articulated or so openly declared. Before moving on to the methodological implications more fully in chapter two, some important terms used throughout the work are now defined.

1.4 Definitions

1.4.1 *The Notion of 'Curriculum'.*

Any attempt to inform curriculum development in the future requires a clear definition of 'the curriculum'. As a number of commentators have pointed out (Walsh, 1993; Aldrich, 1996; Chitty, 1996; Young, 1998), this can be done in a variety of different ways. However, because the focus of this dissertation is values, especially cultural values, it is appropriate to turn to Denis Lawton's definition of the curriculum: "a selection from the culture of a society" (Lawton, 1996: 8). He uses Linton's (1940) notion of culture: "the sum total of the knowledge, attitudes and habitual behaviour patterns shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society", and shows how "Universals" are linked to and become part of the curriculum. Lawton argues that in complex, industrialised western societies such as England's, it is impossible for the culture to be passed on solely through the "family or by means of other face-to-face relations" (*op. cit.*, 1996: 9). It is therefore necessary to delegate the responsibility of passing on some of this knowledge to schools, colleges and other educational institutions. This "passing on" occurs in what could be called the 'formal'

curriculum (Walsh, 1993; Aldrich, 1996). However, socialisation, both within and outside those institutions continues; in the playground, on the way to and from school, within homes, leisure centres, indeed wherever and whenever personal interaction takes place. Students have to learn to form relationships with their contemporaries, family members, employers and so on. They acquire knowledge through practice as much as through theory (Hirst, 1993). This is the informal curriculum.

The focus of this work is on the formal curriculum, although it is recognised that children bring their own or their family's values into the classroom and this can, on occasions, lead to clashes or even conflict¹. But there can be no such thing as a value-free curriculum. Choices about what to include and what not to; the degree of emphasis on one part of the syllabus rather than another; the extent and depth of analysis required of students and so on, all involve some kind of value judgement.

1.4.2 Values

This dissertation will not suggest a set of values to which one might (much less *ought*) subscribe.² As Graham Haydon puts it: "Even if it is a good thing that every individual teacher should have a consistent set of values...., it does not follow that every teacher should have the same set." (Haydon, 1997: 161). There is, after all, ample evidence that society's values change over time, often quite rapidly. The causes of such changes are necessarily complex and circular in nature and range from enlightenment to prejudice; with the former, one might reasonably expect, to be the result of education. Causal relationships, even if they can be described or determined, lie outside the scope of this work, however. What will be examined is what I shall term "congruence", which draws together values and the developing young person.

¹ Indeed, even Lawton's definition has been criticised for implying the passing on of middle-class values at the expense of working-class ones.

² In 1996 SCAA set up a National Forum for Values in Education and the Community. 150 people from "....national organisations with concern for young people or education" (SCAA, 1996) were brought together and agreed a set of values. These were then tested in a MORI poll of 1500 adults, of whom 95 per cent "....agreed to the values outlined in the Forum's statement" (Talbot and Tate, 1997: 3). The problems with this approach have been outlined by John White (1998). For instance, the Forum, whilst large, did not include all sections of society. Employees and the unwaged, including the retired, were not represented (*ibid.*: 17). More seriously, White points to what he calls the "HCF problem", meaning that the search for consensus on values can be attained fairly easily, but only at a level that renders them "....bland" or "....couched in highly general language hiding radical differences of interpretation" (*Ibid.*: 17). So "the least controversial items - as it were the highest common factor in the responses" (*ibid.*: 17-18) are the ones that finally appear.

1.4.3 The developing young person

There are a number of different ways in which the development of young people towards maturity has been theorised, for instance in a Piagetian sense, but in this thesis I shall adopt an essentially pragmatic approach. It is simply accepted that as we age we are exposed to and acquire data from a variety of sources and through that process we form our own set of values, all the time recognising that these are rarely entirely fixed, but will be more or less flexible depending on our circumstances, personalities and backgrounds (Lambert, 1995; Hayden, 1997). The current interest in, and enthusiasm for the notion of lifelong learning is essentially built upon the principle that merely because we have passed beyond the age of compulsory schooling does not mean that our education is finished or complete. The need to update is increasingly apparent as the world economy becomes ever more dynamic, interdependent and subject to change (Handy, 1984, 1995; Barber, 1996; National Commission on Education, 1993).

It is not the intention of this work to undertake any empirical study of 'personal development' or 'maturity'. However, by examining a number of curriculum initiatives across a wide age-range, these terms are used as constructs to help the analysis of the case studies, because any assumptions about values should, it is hypothesised, take personal development and maturity into account.

1.5 Values, 'Congruence' and the developing young person.

Given the definition of the curriculum described above, the knowledge and values that young people possess at the end of their period of formal education is of greater importance than the stage of maturity that they have reached. Being "mature", as it is commonly understood, suggests fully thought-out values, though that is not to suggest such values cannot be changed or modified. Nonetheless, part of the process of moving to adulthood and forming those values is the reality of being exposed to more, and importantly, different ones.³ Thus, there is a link between an individual's

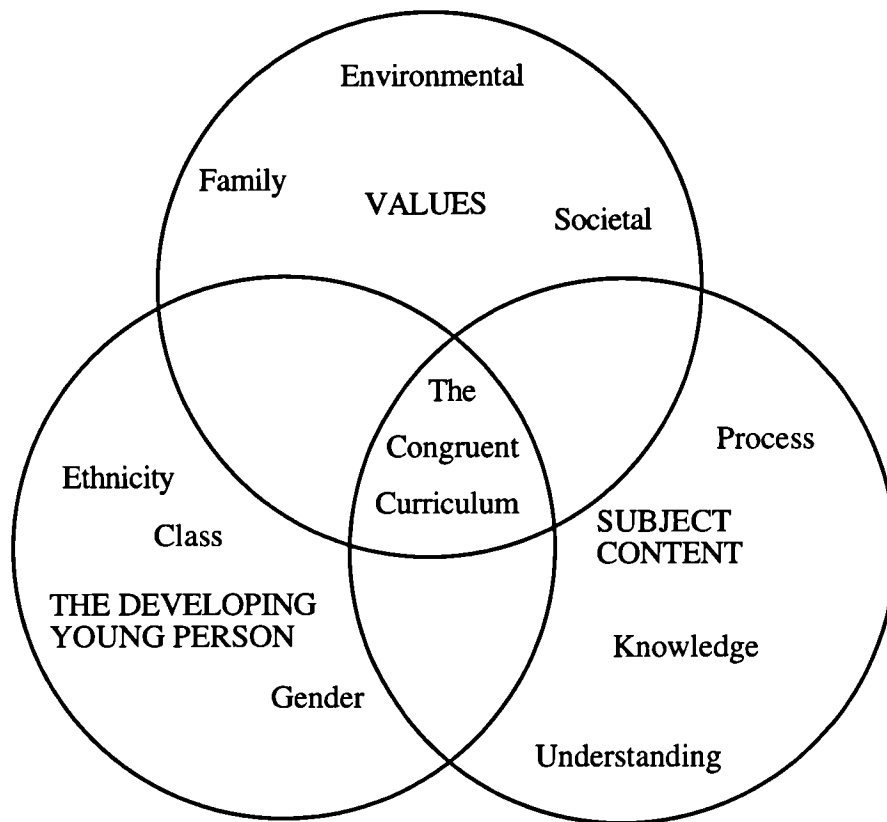
³ Bryson (1998) argues about the need for schools to offer different values to those prevailing in some sections of society. He writes from the perspective of a teacher in London's East End at the time of Stephen Lawrence's racially motivated murder, "....these words (Coloured and Paki) are not always used as insults. For some white people with experience of nothing outside their own culture, they are everyday expressions, a language of ignorance not hatred..." and "....they (disaffected white boys) were committed believers in glorious isolation; they had never had any social contact with black and Asian people and found the whole idea of multiculturalism laughable. They gloried in their rejection of anything they perceived as un-English - a poet's name, a specific reading of history....I was struck by the inarticulate opposition, devoid of a coherent morality and organisation, that these youths

growing maturity and his or her values that can be seen in everyday speech. After all, we often refer to 'immature behaviour' when we describe anti-social activities such as vandalism or bullying. This indicates a sense of our understanding that by certain points in our lives we will have attained certain values. Similarly the expression, "I should have thought you would have grown out of that sort of behaviour by now" is commonly used as a way of shaming children and adolescents into acting in a different and more socially acceptable manner. So the formal curriculum has, in a quite subtle way, to reflect the values base that the learners might be expected to have attained at that stage in their development, so that they can be moved forward towards the goal of possessing the knowledge and values that society ultimately wishes to be 'passed on'. This is the idea of 'congruence': an interconnectedness between values, the stage of development the young person has reached and the curriculum.

In figure 1.1 I have illustrated, in as simple a form as possible, what I mean by the term 'congruence', but inevitably in striving for clarity, the diagram suffers from certain limitations. For instance, it is drawn in two-dimensions whereas it might be possible to imagine the 'circles' in three-dimensional form, so that each one has depth to its field. Thus, in the case of the 'values circle', certain values rise to the 'surface' as society deems them currently important. An example might be a concern for the environment, which thirty years ago would have been far less significant than today.

Another limitation is the solidity of the boundaries of each circle, which gives a false impression of clearly defined borders, when in reality they are fluid. The 'congruent curriculum' does not have frontiers like two nation-states; a better metaphor would be like travelling from Surrey into Hampshire - the scenery, accents and attitudes change, but imperceptibly. It is important, therefore, not to read too much into the spaces enclosed by only two of the circles. One might, for instance, speculate that the original 1988 National Curriculum sits in the area bounded by content and values because, as I discuss in chapter three, it largely disregarded the stages in development reached by young people; or the area where personal development and subject meet but that overlooks values might be where GNVQ could be placed (chapter six), but it would be an exaggeration to suggest that a 'missing' circle was totally ignored by the curriculum developers concerned; that said, the diagram does give an idea of their probable relative weightings.

represented. It underlined why resistance is needed to any notion that school is the place for the three Rs and nothing else." (Bryson, 1998: 17)



The diagram is designed to show the interlocking influences on curriculum development explored in this thesis. The three main features are not presumed to be conceptually equivalent. Nevertheless, it is argued that curriculum developers should pay greater attention to these influences and the way they interact.

Fig. 1.1 A representation of the notion of 'congruence' in the process of curriculum development

It is impossible for the diagram to convey the dynamics that influence each of the 'circles'. Just as societal values change over time, so do rates at which young people develop. Similarly, and vitally, the values that society decides it wants 'passed on' will alter as well. The task of curriculum developers, therefore, is a difficult and challenging one. They have not only to mesh the content circle with the other two but

also to predict, or attempt to anticipate what society might wish to be 'passed on'. But even in defining content they do not have a completely free hand, because the circles interact with each other. Thus a government body created to oversee the curriculum is, to some extent reflecting the values of society, or at least a part of society.

This brings us to the interaction of the developing young person and values. Curriculum designers will doubtless recognise that methods of teaching seven year-olds about economics or business say, will be different from those used to teach eighteen year-olds. Nevertheless, as Bruner wrote, "We begin with the hypothesis that any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development" (Bruner, 1960: 33). In a sense this thesis is an attempt to move Bruner's ideas forward, to add depth and richness to this hypothesis by investigating what *some intellectually honest form* really means. The suggestion is that effective curriculum development recognises the inter-relationship between values and the developing young person and that ineffective curriculum development does not, an argument that will be tested in detail in part two of the thesis. Despite its limitations therefore, which again I stress, the diagram does provide a model that the reader may find helpful in moving through the argument that follows.

There is another important caveat and that concerns the use of the word 'congruent', which might suggest a curriculum that does not challenge young people and the values that they hold. Such an inference must not be drawn. After all, almost every adolescent reaches a point where a growing awareness of their own values causes them to question those of their parents, and often, those of their teachers as well. Far from being 'congruent' this might suggest the reverse; one might even call this 'dissonance'. The point about a curriculum that is 'congruent', however, is that it recognises, accepts and builds upon this awareness, allowing the individual to develop his or her own value set, but challenging that person in a way that if half-formed or ill-thought out, those values will be codified in a fashion that benefits both the individual concerned and ultimately society itself.

Curriculum developers are therefore faced with several challenges if they wish their innovation to be a success. They must accept that values are embedded in their work; that those values should take into account the growing development and maturity of their potential 'market' and, if that is not enough, that the final outcome should be 'congruent'. It is easy to see why such issues might be avoided in the rush to produce text-books, re-train teachers and write syllabuses. But, in the end, if the work is under-theorised with regard to values and the developing young person, it must surely run the risk of failure since it will be seen as inappropriate or irrelevant to the client

group it is hoping to serve. The thrust of part two of the thesis is to examine five curriculum initiatives to test this hypothesis.

1.6 Researching Curriculum Initiatives.

Part two of this thesis analyses five curriculum initiatives, two that were centrally planned - the 1988 National Curriculum and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs); two that were the result of personal initiatives - Business and Information Studies (BIS) and the Nuffield Economics and Business Project and one a qualification set by an independent awarding body - the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW). Taken together the analysis spans a period of development from the age of fourteen through to people in their mid to late twenties.

First it analyses the 1988 National Curriculum as a case example of top-down curriculum planning. Under the Education Reform Act of 1988 all state schools in England and Wales were obliged to conform to a statutory National Curriculum. Despite a growing consensus on curriculum reform through the 1960s and 1970s, such as that emanating from the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) (*inter alia*, DES, 1976; 1977), the National Curriculum for secondary schools of the late twentieth century bore a close resemblance to that specified under the Education Act of 1902 (Aldrich 1996: 33). The National Curriculum's introduction exemplified the political and cultural mistrust of the 'educational establishment' in general and teachers in particular, held by elements within the Conservative government (Lawton, 1994). In that sense it represents a clash of values, and given the fact that it has been consistently and constantly modified since its introduction, it raises the question as to whether the values that it projected were 'congruent' with those of society.

Certainly the 1988 National Curriculum dealt a severe blow to economics and business education (Whitehead, 1996: 198), even to those courses that had flourished in the 14-16 curriculum up to that point. In the second of the curriculum initiatives to be analysed, Business and Information Studies (BIS) is examined in chapter four for the values it projected and the reasons behind its considerable success. It is instructive to note that BIS managed to 'survive' the 1988 reforms and has continued to grow, spawning a number of imitators, with the result that GCSE Business Studies now accounts for over 100,000 subject entries per year (see figure 4.3). Despite this, BIS has never achieved similar success with its A-level version. Could it be that the

values that it projects are 'congruent' for younger students but not for those who are more mature? Chapter four explores this issue in detail.

The importance of the National Curriculum cannot be over emphasised, but its immediate influence spreads only as far as 16 year-olds and, following the Dearing Report (Dearing, 1994), with ever-diminishing force at Key Stage 4. Increasing staying-on rates have raised a number of issues for the 16-19 curriculum. At this level the hegemony of 'subjects' has ruled unquestioned, dominated as it has been by A-levels and university requirements. The Nuffield Economics and Business Project is an attempt to update both the content and pedagogy of the two subjects, Economics and Business Studies, which have experienced quite different levels of popularity since their introduction to the post-16 curriculum. The analysis of this curriculum initiative presented in chapter five shows that a closer attention was paid to both values and the developing young person, but numbers initially opting for the syllabus, whilst healthy, are not spectacular. It is argued that in this case the curriculum has values that are not 'congruent' with those who decide whether or not to adopt it, which is one reason why it has so far failed to attract large numbers.

A-levels themselves have for some time been questioned in the context of a broader 16+ cohort. Whilst some commentators such as Michael Young and his team at the Institute of Education's Post-16 Centre have long argued for a 14 -19 curriculum (Young, 1998), this has not thus far been accepted. What is conceded, however, is the necessity to widen students' experiences, not just to other subjects, but also towards the vocational (Dearing, 1996). General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) were introduced in the early 1990s as a means of bridging the gap between A-levels and vocational training. They were created by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and were predicated on the basis of competence testing. That is important as far as values are concerned because advocates of this form of assessment assert that it is value-free. Chapter six will examine this contention using GNVQ Business, which was one of the first batch of subjects to be introduced and which remains the largest in terms of entries, as an exemplar.

For the most academic in our society the formal curriculum continues well into their mid-20s. People who wish to obtain one of the UK's premier business qualifications, membership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW), must go through an intensive training involving examinations at three levels. These examinations are now almost exclusively sat by post graduates. The curriculum for these students is determined by the Institute itself, with what one might assume to be quite clear economic and business objectives leading to vocational

competence. Nevertheless the examinations show a decline in popularity. Chapter seven therefore questions once more the manner in which values and maturity interact and the extent to which the examinations are in fact a true reflection of the needs of the modern accountancy profession.

1.7 Exploring Future Directions

The case studies in part two represent large-scale curriculum initiatives and are therefore useful as tests of the way values and the changing needs and aspirations of developing young people have been considered, but 'congruence' requires further exemplification. This leads to the investigations in part three of this thesis.

Here the work examines two distinct but connected areas: thinking skills and the decline of economics as a school subject. The common link is the centrality of values and their consideration in the design and application of future curricular work.

In chapter eight the hypothesis is that if thinking skills were taught more explicitly then students would be able to question any explicit or implicit value positions in subjects more readily and more effectively. The chapter describes a small-scale research project that was conducted to see whether being taught thinking skills can make a difference to value questions in a business context, but it may be that students can benefit across a range of subjects. If so, designing a scheme of work to include thinking skills will have to take into account the maturity of the learner so that difficult philosophical concepts can be understood by different age groups. If undertaken strategically, then, a more critical stance of the values students encounter in both the formal and informal curriculum will result.

The second investigation focuses on subjects and what causes some to decline and some to grow. The chapter will look at one in the former category, economics. It hypothesises that there is an increasing mis-match between societal values and those expressed by the subject i.e. a lack of 'congruence', and that this lies at the heart of its growing unpopularity.

Throughout parts two and three there is an emphasis on economics and business education. It is helpful, therefore, to put this subject area into the context of the English curriculum. It is to that background that we now turn.

1.8 Economics and Business Education: an introductory outline.

Both economics and business are relatively new to the school curriculum. Economics was introduced after the second world war to an often sceptical world (Robbins, 1955) and, as we shall see in chapter nine, it still exhibits internal tensions about its role. Similarly business studies has suffered, although in somewhat different ways. As Stephen Barnes (1993) put it:

"The label 'Business Studies' in many ways expresses quite well the ambiguities inherent in a subject that many still regard as a dubious and upstart offspring of its legitimate parent 'Economics'. Does not the appendage 'Studies' in a subject name suggest some academic inadequacy in a subject itself? Can 'Business' be said to represent any kind of academic discipline? Is not Business an essentially practical affair concerned mainly with circumstantial and contingent realities? Surely it is Economics that provides the real theoretical rationale for resources allocation decisions?" (Barnes 1993: 41)

In addition, business studies suffers from an internal tension resulting from its desire to acquire academic respectability whilst simultaneously maintaining its vocational roots.⁴ GNVQ (chapter six) has added to this stress.

The fight for legitimacy has therefore occupied centre stage, but it has been guerrilla warfare against what might be termed the "Big Battalions" of the curriculum (Goodson, 1985). These subjects can call on historical precedence (including what Hirst [1993] terms the rationalist approach to the curriculum), large numbers teaching and studying their subjects at all levels and even substantial financial resources. Given this situation the 1988 National Curriculum dealt both economics and business studies a severe blow, which the latter at least, has survived.

The irony of the exclusion of economics and business from the curriculum, particularly during the 1980s, was that a fundamental change in economic philosophy was affecting huge swathes of society with few of those most concerned having even the slightest notion of its implications⁵- both for good and ill. Deregulation,

⁴ The insertion of critical path analysis (CPA) in the core for A-level business studies (SCAA, 1997) is typical of this tension - a 'hard' topic and therefore 'academic', but self evidently vocational. After all, CPA is a management decision-making tool which suffers from considerable limitations (Wood, 1995). Similar mathematical and statistical concepts were originally inserted in the UCLES A-level business studies syllabus in order to increase its 'rigour' and gain respectability (Lines, 1988; appendix 1).

⁵ As Hutton (1996) describes it: "The incoming Conservative government had a programme of action to put Britain back on its feet. The task was the revitalisation of British capitalism and the method was

privatisation, a switch from direct to indirect taxation and so on were all policies founded on economic principles that would be unlikely subjects for classroom analysis and discussion save in the relatively few schools where business and economics were taught.

As mentioned above, for those of us who were involved, the early days of business and economics education focused on practicalities, on the basis that if the subjects were to become rooted in the curriculum, it was in schools and classrooms that it would happen (Lines, 1987). Thus the emphasis was on creativity and innovations that together would attract both teachers and students and thus, by weight of numbers if nothing else, ensure the subjects' survival. As time passed there were places where a more reflective stance was adopted, both to the initial and the in-service training of teachers - most notably the Economic Awareness Teacher Training (EcATT) programme run at the Institute of Education, University of London and the University of Manchester. There were also the first PGCE courses, started in economics in 1972 and in business studies in 1975 at the Institute of Education, as well as Masters level courses that commenced in 1980 (Whitehead, 1996: 198). These have now spread around the country.

The position of economics and business in the curriculum today remains uncertain but generally optimistic. Business Studies at Key Stage Four is flourishing, whilst economics at that level continues its decline. The introduction of GNVQ Part 1 into schools is likely to accelerate the trends, although as at A-level, there is a certain amount of tension between GNVQ Business and its 'academic' equivalent (see chapter six). Within the 16-19 age group Business Studies A-level continues its rapid expansion, matched again by Economic's decline. Suggested changes to both the Key Stage Four and A-level curricula may offer scope for further expansion in the future.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has described the evolutionary nature of a research problem, from which emanated a set of questions concerning values, the developing young person and the way they interact. Given its aim of informing curriculum development in the future, the dissertation will attempt to answer these questions. The key terms used throughout the work have been defined and the notion of 'congruence' introduced.

the adoption of the free-market nostrums of the newly assertive free-market economists. Britain had to rediscover the verities of the age of Adam Smith; the state was to be rolled back; and the felicitous invisible hand of market forces was to be ungloved. At a stroke this would curb inflation and make the economy more competitive" (Hutton 1996: 11).

The chapter moved to a brief description of the ways the case examples and investigations in parts two and three illuminate the argument and finally it provided a brief historical outline of the context of economics and business education in England and Wales.

Section 1.3 of the chapter emphasised the particular perspective that this form of research brings: the advantage of detailed, often first-hand knowledge and experience against a possible challenge to the researcher's impartiality. It argued that all research involves some value judgements, but that it is important not only to be explicit about them but also to show how this work possesses an appropriate methodology. It is to that we now turn.

1.10 References

Aldrich, R. (1996) *Education for the Nation*, London: Cassell.

Aldrich, R. and White, J. (1998) *The National Curriculum beyond 2000: the QCA and the Aims of Education*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Barber, M. (1996) *The Learning Game. Arguments for an Educational Revolution*, London: Victor Gollancz.

Barnes, S. (1993) "A-level courses in Business Studies" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 1 No 1 Spring.

Bruner, J. S. (1960, reprinted 1977) *The Process of Education*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. S., (1966) *Towards a Theory of Instruction*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bryson, D. (1998) "Behavioural Difficulties" in *The Times educational Supplement*, Secondary p.17.

Chitty, C. (1996) *Generating a National Curriculum. Block 4: Organising and Control of Schooling*, Milton Keynes: The Open University.

- Dearing, R. (1994) *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: Final Report*, SCAA.
- Dearing, R. (1998) "Getting it Together - An Educational Overview." Text of a speech given to the Lloyds TSB Forum, London: Lloyds TSB Group Ltd.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1976) *School Education in England: Problems and Initiatives*, London: DES.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1977) *Curriculum 11 - 16. Working papers by HM Inspectorate: a contribution to current debate*, London: HMSO.
- Evans R. J. (1997) *In Defence of History*, London: Granta Books.
- Goodson, I. F. (Ed.) (1985) *Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Handy, C (1984) *The Empty Raincoat*, London: Hutchinson.
- Handy, C. (1995) *Beyond Certainty*, London: Hutchinson.
- Haydon, G. (1997) *Teaching about Values*, London: Cassell.
- Hirst, P. H., and Peters, R. S. (1970) *The Logic of Education*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Hirst, P. (1993) "The Foundations of the National Curriculum: Why Subjects" in O'Hear, P., & White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) (1996) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Hutton, W. (1996) *The State We're In*, London: Vintage.
- Lambert, D. (1995) *A Study of Prejudice with Particular Reference to Geography Education*, unpublished PhD. thesis, ULIE.
- Lawton, D. (1994) *The Tory Mind on Education 1979-94*, London: The Falmer Press.

- Lawton, D. (1996) *Beyond the National Curriculum: Teacher Professionalism and Empowerment*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Lawton, D. (1996) "The Changing context: the National Curriculum" in Hodgkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Lines, D. R. (1987) *Business Studies: The Search for a Paradigm*, Unpublished M. A. dissertation, London: ULIE.
- Linton, R. (Ed.) (1940) *Acculturation*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- National Commission on Education, (1993) *Learning to Succeed*, London: Heinemann.
- Robbins, L. (1955) in *Economics*, Vol. LXV, No. 260, December.
- Slater, F. (1996) "Illustrating Research in Geography Education" in Kent, A., Lambert, D., Naish, M., and Slater, F. *Geography in Education. Viewpoints on Teaching and Learning*, Cambridge: CUP.
- Smith, R. and Standish, P. (Eds.) (1997) *Teaching Right and Wrong: Moral Education in the Balance*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham.
- Talbot, M. and Tate, N. (1997) "Shared Values in a Pluralist Society?" in Smith, R., and Standish, P. (Eds.) *Teaching Right and Wrong: Moral Education in the Balance*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham
- Walsh, P. (1993) *Education and Meaning. Philosophy in Practice*, London: Cassell.
- White, J. (1998) "New Aims for a New National Curriculum" in Aldrich, R., and White, J. *The National Curriculum beyond 2000: the QCA and the Aims of Education*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Whitehead D. (1996) "Economics and Business Education" in Gordon, P (Ed.) *A Guide to Educational Research*, London: Woburn Press.
- Wood, A. (1995) *Business Strategies. How are Decisions Made?* Harlow: Longman.

Young, M. F. D. (1998) *The Curriculum of the Future*, London: Falmer Press.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The chapter analyses ways of categorising research. It offers a number of research 'approaches' and suggests that no single one is appropriate for the argument advanced in this dissertation; instead that they should be applied on a 'fitness for purpose' basis. This is termed a pluralist approach and is the only one that can be considered valid in the circumstances. Detail is supplied on the particular methods which will be used in each of the chapters that follow.

2.2 Categorising Research

The evolutionary nature of the research 'problem' described in chapter one, makes a simple classification into currently accepted *methodological* 'norms' inappropriate. Indeed, Slater (1996) argues that the conscious adoption of methodologies which precede the identification of the educational research 'problem' is a fairly recent phenomenon:

"In earlier days....research was classified into work belonging to philosophical, historical, sociological, psychological and general curriculum concerns. Those categories are still useful for revealing the academic context, focus and purpose of research. Certainly they are rather clear-cut areas and there are not many problems in assigning dissertations to the appropriate category."

(Slater 1996: 293)

If these categories still hold, and there is surely no reason why they cannot, then this dissertation falls quite distinctly into two of them: historical and curriculum concerns, although there are sections which inevitably touch on the other three.

The advantage of deciding on the appropriate methodology and then describing the 'problem' is clear: if conclusions are questioned, the methodology helps to legitimise them. However, whilst this approach offers research validity, it is also potentially restricting. Interesting and illuminating areas of discovery may be denied to both

researcher and reader for fear that they might fall outside the accepted methodological frame and therefore become in some way not 'legitimate'. Evans (1997) takes this argument *reductio ad absurdum* in the context of historical research. If the historian, he says, *only* referred to sources in an objective way in order to get "...the facts right. That (is) mere antiquarianism. A chronicler could do that." (*ibid.*: 225). Evans goes on to quote the eminent historian, E. H. Carr in support of this point:

"When we call a historian objective, we mean two things. First of all, we mean he has the capacity to rise above the limited vision of his own situation in society and in history....Secondly, we mean that he has the capacity to project his vision into the future in such a way as to give him a more profound and more lasting insight into the past than can be attained by those historians whose outlook is bounded by their own immediate situation." (Carr, 1987: 30 quoted in Evans, 1997: 225)

Since I am not a historian, the objective of my research is not primarily to give "a more profound....insight into the past", although that would be a considerable bonus were it to happen. However, as I indicated in chapter one, I do claim to "rise above" my personal experiences in order to project my vision into the future. After all,

"It is surely very helpful, interesting and important to have different views of research and its purposes and goals, and to choose appropriately from among them. Having refined purposes and goals, then to move into a research position seems a sensible way of ordering activity, as long as this is open to critical discussion." (Slater 1996: 294)

The final section in this chapter will detail the methodologies used at different points in the work in order to allow for 'critical discussion', but also as a means of guiding the reader through the logic of the process. First, however, it is necessary to examine the underlying philosophical stance that underpins the research.

2.3 Research Approaches

Research through experimentation is systematic, unlike experience, which is necessarily haphazard. Research that is based on the inductive-deductive model of reasoning "must be regarded as the most successful approach to the discovery of truth,

particularly as far as the natural sciences are concerned" (Cohen and Manion 1994: 5). Having said that, science does not confine itself solely to one approach. Astronomy, for example, largely relies on observation but "....nobody has ventured to claim that astronomy is not a science" (Evans, 1997: 53). It must surely be right to adopt the most appropriate methodology for the task in hand, whether it be in the natural or social sciences, as long as the researcher recognises the necessity to be as detached, objective and self critical as possible. There is, after all, an array of methods available. The four set out below follow Bassey (1990) and Slater (1996).

2.3.1 The Positivist Approach

Scientific researchers devote a great deal of time ensuring that experiments can be replicated and identical conclusions reached. The work is open to scrutiny by fellow professionals so that any errors can and will be identified and corrected. Only then will it be accepted. This leads to what is called the positivist approach, which assumes that a phenomenon exists which can be studied without being affected by the research and the researcher. In the ordered reality of the scientific laboratory this is the *sine qua non* of research. Examples of techniques used by the positivist researcher for analysing the social world include surveys, observations, testing, pre-test, post-test formulae and so on (Bell, 1993; Cohen and Manion, 1994). The work will tend to emphasise the quantitative.

Once *people* become the subject of study, research inevitably loses the sterility of the laboratory, although that does not mean that it cannot be positive. This 'contamination' is recognised in the world of business as *The Hawthorne Effect*. Although generally used today to illustrate the beneficial impact on motivation of managers who pay attention to the needs and aspirations of the workforce, it came into being following an experiment conducted by Elton Mayo¹ in a factory in Hawthorne, Chicago, between 1927 and 1932. Mayo, in true scientific fashion, was attempting to replicate the research of F. W. Taylor² into ways of maximising output. Mayo changed the physical and social conditions of the workforce in the factory by altering the levels of lighting, break times and so on. As expected, improved conditions resulted in increased productivity, but to Mayo's surprise, when conditions were returned to their pre-experimental state, productivity continued to rise. The fact that the workforce were being observed as part of the experiment had an influence on

¹ Elton Mayo (1880 - 1949) became well known as the originator of the 'Human Relations School of Management'.

² F. W. Taylor (1856 - 1915) whose notion of 'scientific management' led, amongst other things, to what became commonly known as 'time and motion' study, but which is better termed 'work study'.

their behaviour.³ This may appear to render the positivistic approach unusable in the social sciences. Nevertheless, there are occasions in social science research when modified versions can and should be applied, as long as the researcher is aware of the problems the human dimension brings.

2.3.2 *Interpretative Research*

The influence of the experience of individuals, which is necessarily subjective, leads to what is termed a 'softer' approach to research - which is not to suggest that it is any easier to undertake. Interpretative research indicates a rejection of immutable laws that govern behaviour and therefore becomes anti-positivist. It recognises that an observed phenomenon may be interpreted in two ways by two observers (Shimaraha, 1988; Greenfield, 1997). Typically the interpretative researcher will use techniques such as observation, note taking, structured and semi structured interviews, diary keeping and illuminative descriptions, but all of these techniques are problematic in one way or another (Bell, 1993; Cohen and Manion, 1994). In several of the chapters that follow I shall be using interpretative research techniques, especially semi-structured interviews with individuals closely concerned with the curriculum developments under scrutiny. In one, as a participant observer, I was necessarily closer to the interviewees than in the others where I had few, or no connections. My task, as a researcher, was to ensure that as similar a degree of detachment applied in both situations as possible. This I did by asking identical general questions and by restricting my personal interventions to the minimum required to encourage the interviewee to explore areas of particular interest in greater depth.

2.3.3 *Action research*

Action research carries the notion of interpretation one stage further, in that the researcher is part of the research 'problem' itself. Action research is concerned with examining phenomena from within, with the intention of improving practice rather than producing knowledge (Elliott, 1991:49). It tends to be small-scale and:

"....situational - it is concerned with diagnosing a problem in a specific context and attempting to solve it in that context; it is usually (though not inevitable) collaborative - teams of researchers and

³ It is also accepted that the researcher-observer in the Hawthorne experiment was seen by the employees as a quasi-supervisor. Adult researchers in classrooms may have a similar impact upon the behaviour of the children they observe. The existence of the "Pygmalion" and "John Henry" effects also command attention in this context (Borg and Gall, 1989).

practitioners work together on a project; it is participatory - team members themselves take part directly or indirectly in implementing the research; and it is self evaluative - modifications are continuously evaluated within the ongoing situation, the ultimate objective being to improve practice in some way or other." (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 186)

The action researcher's techniques will include acting, observing, refining and re-planning. Work will often be empirical but subject to critical review with a resulting action plan (Naish, 1996).

2.3.4 Post Modern

In the post-modern research frame the perceived realities of the outside world result in texts that record the researcher's interpretation of those realities. But, the "researcher is aware of the 'reflexive' nature of his/her account and attempts to deconstruct the text." (Slater, 1996: 296). The point is that when any text is written suggesting an objective account it can never be so. The post modern writers therefore,

"....recognise that all research methods have a political context and that who speaks for whom becomes a central question. Postmodern researchers try to break down the distinction between researcher and researched by producing collaborative analysis that avoids imposing the researcher's understanding of reality." (Slater, 1996: 296)

The methods used by the post modern researcher will be those of the interpretative or action researcher, but the writing will be changed into a field of enquiry in itself. Although not self consciously adopting a post-modern approach in this work, there is an acceptance that the writing is creative of itself; that much of the cognition behind the work is the result of critical thinking, writing and reflection, of stimulation from pupils, students, teachers and colleagues in higher education, of inspection and advising, of assessing at national and international levels and from the very act of teaching itself. Indeed, the very notion of 'curriculum congruence' results from the act of composing the dissertation; of linking together what before had been somewhat disparate, disjointed or part-considered ideas concerning values and maturation, to form a recognisable pattern or coherent whole.

2.4 Blurring the Boundaries

As part of the community of economists one is acutely aware of the desire by some to be seen as 'scientific': to research like scientists, and to be detached like scientists. The white-coated image is useful to economists because it suggests impartiality when offering policy options (not policy advice, note, since that would indicate a normative position). A similar, if less intense desire can be observed within educational researchers, so that action research for instance, because it does not involve the study of large numbers of cases, or establishing as much control as possible over variables, or using precise sampling techniques and so on, is somehow seen as less respectable than applied research (Cohen and Manion, 1994).⁴

Nevertheless,

"Both qualitative and quantitative research have philosophical foundations, characteristics, and techniques that make them ideally suited for the exploration of some questions and inadequate for the investigation of others." (Borg & Gall 1989: 380)

And, as Dobbert (1982) points out, "All scientific procedures have their weaknesses because they are designed to do one thing and not others." Indeed, knowing that a variety of methods is available can be liberating, especially for the researcher who comes to the research 'problem' and then seeks the one that best enables the phenomenon to be described and explained. As Bell (1993) puts it,

"Classifying an approach as quantitative or qualitative, ethnographic, survey, action research or whatever, does not mean that once an approach has been selected, the researcher may not move from the methods normally associated with that style. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses and each is particularly suitable for a particular context. The approach adopted and the methods of data collection selected will depend on the nature of the enquiry and the types of information required." (Bell 1993: 4)

and

⁴ Cohen and Manion (1994) offer critiques of positivism and the "newer perspectives" in chapter one, "Introduction: The Nature of Inquiry", pages 22-25 and 34-36.

"Different styles, traditions or approaches use different methods of collecting data, but no approach prescribes nor automatically rejects any particular method." (Bell 1993: 5)

And so it is with this work. I argue for a pluralist methodological approach, using fitness for purpose as a guiding rule for the particular methods that are applied.

2.5 Applied Methodology

The research is in two parts. The first broadly uses a case study approach to analyse curriculum developments at a national level, the majority with a focus on economics and business. Some of these are initiatives in which I have not played a primary role. I am able to bring a more detached view of the researcher to this analysis using secondary data, some of which is contemporary to the events and some written at a distance. In the cases where I have been closely involved with the work described I have sought corroboration from other observers and researchers, sometimes through written records and sometimes in oral form.

The second part brings together the fruits of the research in part one to suggest ways forward. This is done parochially in the first instance to argue that business and economics education has an essential role within the curriculum, but that it may have to change its form in order to be accepted. Secondly, in a wider sense, to contextualise curriculum change and explore the aims and values which the formal educational process sets out to achieve at different times and stages in the development of young people.

In table 2.1, each chapter is described in terms of the method or methods used to gather data. In a number of cases more than one research approach has been applied, but there is no suggestion that there are clear and obvious boundaries between them. This is justified on the grounds of fitness for purpose (*ibid.*). Where two are quoted, the first tends to predominate:

Chapter	Dominant Research Approach	Data Source - in approximate order of weighting
3: The National Curriculum: Its Values And Origins.	Interpretative Positivist	Secondary sources; semi-structured interviews.
4: A Key Stage 4 Initiative: Business & Information Studies.	Interpretative Positivist	Semi-structured interviews with main protagonists; contemporary documents; secondary sources.
5: A 16 -19 Initiative: The Nuffield Economics & Business Project.	Interpretative Positivist	Participant observation; contemporary documents; semi-structured interviews with main protagonists; secondary data; research findings.
6: A 14 - 19 Initiative: General National Vocational Qualifications.	Interpretative Positivist	Secondary sources; contemporary documents; research findings; comparative study; student reflection.
7: Values and a Vocational Qualification: Becoming a Chartered Accountant.	Interpretative Positivist	Semi-structured interviews; questionnaires; observation; secondary sources.
8: Thinking Skills: Improving The Critique Of Business.	Interpretative	Primary data: student's written work.
9: Towards a 'New Economics'.	Positivist	Secondary data; comparative study.

n.b. The dominant research approaches are not hermetically sealed categories and readers should appreciate that there is more cross-over and blurring of boundaries than this table implies.

Table 2.1 Applied Research: summary of principle data collection methods.

2.5.1 Chapter 3: The National Curriculum: Its Values And Origins.

For approximately ten years the 1988 National Curriculum has exercised a profound influence on the secondary curriculum in England and Wales and so, for the purposes of this thesis, it demanded a thorough investigation into its origins and implementation, in order to establish the extent to which it considered values, maturity and their interaction. Such research required detailed reference to the politicians and public servants who helped to create it, as well as the responses to it of educationalists and academics. Thus the autobiographies and speeches of the leading players, and in particular the Secretary of State for Education at the time, Kenneth

Baker's and the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher's provide data to help understand the motivations of those most closely involved. Whilst accepting the bias of autobiographies, as Lawton says, relying on them is "...clearly a dangerous practice" (Lawton, 1994: 67), it is possible to draw conclusions by studying a number which comment on the same event. In this case the biographies written by political commentators such as Hugo Young and Anthony McSmith were referenced as well as the autobiographies of politicians from opposing wings of the Conservative Party at the time, Nigel Lawson and Kenneth Clarke. The quite different perspective of Duncan Graham, initially appointed to the National Curriculum Council by one Secretary of State and then sacked by another provided further reflection. The academic response, in the form of books and articles, written both at the time and afterwards provided yet another view. Finally, the place of, and emphasis on subjects, and particularly economics and business were analysed both through secondary sources and an interview with Dr Nick Tate, chief executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) undertaken in February 1998. Overall the research in this chapter owes much to similar approaches which can be found in Chitty's, *Towards a New Educational System: The Victory of the New Right?* (1989) and Lawton's *The Tory Mind on Education 1979-94* (1994).

2.5.2 Chapter 4: A Key Stage 4 Initiative: Business & Information Studies (BIS).

BIS was created before the 1988 National Curriculum came into being. It was immediately popular with both teachers and students. Its existence was threatened by the National Curriculum but it survived, flourished and spawned an A-level off-shoot, which has proved to be far less successful than the GCSE version. BIS was largely the creation of one man, Ben Kelsey, who was at the time Hampshire LEA's Business Studies adviser. Using semi-structured interviews, Ben Kelsey and other members of his team were interviewed to discover what the motivations were for establishing the project and the extent to which values and the growing maturity of young people were considered. Contemporary sources, such as newspaper articles, HMI reports and materials produced by the project team were used to corroborate material revealed through the interviews. Further analysis was undertaken, using interviews and other secondary sources, of the reasons for the introduction and comparative lack of success of the A-level version of BIS.

2.5.3 Chapter 5: A 16 -19 Initiative: The Nuffield Economics & Business Project.

As one of the co-directors of the Nuffield Project I was able to bring the perspective of a participant observer to this chapter. I also had access to primary data such as

minutes of meetings, letters and other correspondence which can be used to illustrate the challenges of curriculum development that the team faced, and show how the issues of values and the development of young people were addressed. Much of this historical primary data can be found in appendix two, which supports the analysis found in the chapter itself. In addition to my personal perspective I also interviewed my three co-directors and, to obtain an independent view, used recently commissioned research on the impact of the Project undertaken by a team from Staffordshire University.

2.5.4 Chapter 6: A 14 - 19 Initiative: General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs).

GNVQs were introduced with the intention of providing an alternative to 'academic' and vocational courses. They were also predicated on the basis of competence testing which, the chapter argues, suggested a certain set of values. Evidence to support this view came from primary research undertaken by the author as well as a major longitudinal study. Comparative analysis was carried out between GNVQ Business and GCE A-level Business Studies in order to establish the extent of their differences concerning values, and further, if these differences are changing as GNVQ specifications are modified over time. A small-scale primary research project was used to ask more specific questions about the teaching and learning styles adopted for GNVQ and A-levels.

2.5.5 Chapter 7: Values and a Vocational Qualification: Becoming a Chartered Accountant.

The training of accountants is largely vocational. Secondary sources were used to investigate the relationship between it and the national training framework. Research commissioned by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) was analysed for indications of 'congruence' within the qualification process and this was in turn tested against primary research. This research involved interviews with training partners in the major accountancy firms, with tutors in firms established specifically to prepare candidates for the accountancy exams and with examiners. Questionnaire data from the candidates themselves was also applied as were detailed notes taken from training sessions observed in tutoring firms.

2.5.6 Chapter 8: Thinking Skills: Improving The Critique Of Business

This chapter describes a small-scale research project involving a number of students in one Sixth Form College. The research was designed to discover the ways in which it might be possible to encourage pupils to evaluate the attitudes and values which subjects, either implicitly or explicitly, contain. It explored the idea of improving students' thinking skills, not just in economics and business, though this is the context in which the research took place, but in a wider sphere as well.

2.5.7 Chapter 9: Changing The Values Base: Towards A 'new Economics'.

The decline in numbers studying economics is not just a phenomenon in England and Wales, it is world-wide. This chapter analyses possible reasons for this, largely using secondary data. It evaluates two curriculum developments, the EBEA's 16 - 19 Project and the economics element within the Nuffield Project (chapter five), to judge the extent to which environmental and ethical issues were considered in both. In the case of the former this was done through a comparative analysis of other recent initiatives in economics that have incorporated such issues and in the latter through an analysis of the text books designed to be used to deliver the course. The contention is that the declining popularity of the subject may be the result of a lack of 'congruence' with prevailing cultural values.

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter has argued that a pluralist methodology based on fitness for purpose is appropriate for this particular research 'problem'. The problem itself is wide-ranging, for whilst its main focus necessarily falls within economics and business education, it is attempting to advance our knowledge of values, the developing young person and the curriculum (what I have here called 'congruence'), and by so doing, in a wider context, inform curriculum development. I argue, therefore, that the application of a single methodology would not be as illuminating as the pluralist approach I have self consciously adopted. Indeed I might go further and suggest that the nature of this research leaves no alternative but to use fitness for purpose as the litmus test of applicability. The research that informs this thesis spans a good many years during which time my relationship with the subject matter has varied. I have drawn from the opportunities and experiences as they have happened, collected and retrieved data, and where necessary returned to situations via retrospective interviews. Coherence is achieved, for whilst each chapter is in some sense self contained, the issues of values,

the development of young people and especially the notion of 'congruence', run throughout the work.

There is another 'text', which would be recognised by the post-modernists, and that is the social, political and economic dimension of education in England and Wales at the turn of the century. Thus whilst economics and business education remains the focus, it is necessary to set it in the context of a national scene, since that has and will critically affect its future direction. It is to the context of a national curriculum and specifically the 1988 National curriculum that we now turn.

2.7 References

- Bassey, M. (1990) "On the Nature of Research in Education (part 2)" *Research Intelligence*, Bera Newsletter Autumn: 39-44.
- Bell, J. (1993) *Doing Your Research Project*, Milton Keynes: Open University.
- Borg, W. R. (1963) *Educational Research: An Introduction*, London: Longman.
- Borg, W. R., and Gall, M. D. (1989) *Educational Research. An Introduction*, New York: Longman.
- Carr, E. H. (1961, reprinted 1987) *What is History*, London: Macmillan.
- Chitty, C. (1989) *Towards a New Educational System: The Victory of the New Right?* Lewes: The Falmer Press.
- Cohen, L., and Manion, L. (1994) *Research Methods in Education*, 4th Ed. London: Routledge.
- Dobbert, M. L. (1982) *Ethnographic Research: Theory and Application for Modern Schools and Societies*, New York: Praeger.
- Elliott, J. (1991) *Action Research for Educational Change*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Evans R. J. (1997) *In Defence of History*, London: Granta Books.

Lawton, D. (1994) *The Tory Mind on Education 1979-94*, London: The Falmer Press.

Naish, M (1996) "Action research for a new professionalism in geography education" in Kent, A., Lambert, D., Naish, M., and Slater, F. *Geography ion Education. Viewpoints on Teaching and Learning*, Cambridge: CUP.

Sherman, R., and Webb, R. (Eds.) (1988) *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods*, London: Falmer.

Shimahara, N. (1988) "Anthroethnography: A Methodological Consideration" in Sherman, R., and Webb, R. (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods*, London: Falmer.

Slater, F. (1996) "Illustrating Research in Geography Education" in Kent, A., Lambert, D., Naish, M., and Slater, F. *Geography ion Education. Viewpoints on Teaching and Learning*, Cambridge: CUP.

Part 2: Curriculum Development In Action

Part two focuses on curriculum initiatives generally and more specifically, ones in economics and business education. Each of them offers a particular view of values and the developing young person and so help to illuminate the notion of 'curriculum congruence'. Together they span the ages of fourteen through to people in their mid to late twenties. The first three are essentially school based and what in generally accepted terminology would be called, 'academic'. They are in turn: the 1988 National Curriculum, Business and Information Studies (BIS), and the Nuffield Economics and Business Project. The final two contain strong vocational elements and target students beyond compulsory schooling. They are, General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) accountancy training qualification.

A number of important themes are raised through the analysis of the projects. Of primary significance is the disjointed, perhaps esoteric manner in which the curriculum developments took place. Although there can be little doubt that they were all created with the intention of raising educational standards, their underpinning values and philosophies led to different conclusions about how that should be achieved. Arguably the National Curriculum and GNVQ were ill founded from the outset and have in consequence been subject to constant revision. Even BIS and the Nuffield course, which have shown themselves to be popular, did not consider values and the developing young person carefully enough and so have either ventured into new areas with considerably less success or have failed to achieve the market penetration hoped of them by their creators. Finally, the ICAEW exams have not kept up with a changing clientele possessing differing demands and aspirations from those of the past, and as a result they are facing declining numbers opting to take the qualification as a route to a business career.

CHAPTER 3

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM: ITS ORIGINS AND VALUES

3.1 Introduction

The chapter traces the origins and values of the 1988 National Curriculum. It is important to this dissertation because its values were quite particular and these included, as we shall see, a very limited perspective of the maturing young person. As a result of the way it was conceived, 'new' subjects, including those of special relevance to this work, economics and business, were largely ignored (Pring, 1989).

The National Curriculum overloaded teachers and schools in a number of ways, but it also failed to take a strategic view of the young person being educated and especially their growing maturity and changing values. The attempt to define the specific content of those subjects that were included, it will be argued, reflected the values of the past rather than the ones held by the majority of students in schools and by English society in general at the end of the 1980s and the 1990s.

The 1988 National Curriculum therefore presents strong case material for the argument advanced in this thesis; namely, that given its apparent disregard for the developing young person, as well as its projection of inappropriate values and subject content, it was inevitable that it would not emerge as a 'congruent' curriculum. That is why, in an attempt to make it so, it has been subject to constant modification and change ever since it was introduced.

3.2 The Background

It is suggested that there have been three pivotal moments in the school curriculum of England and Wales this century. First, the 1902 Education Act¹, second the 1944 Education Act, and third The Education Reform Act of 1988 (*inter alia* Aldrich, 1988, 1996; Lawton, 1996a, 1996b; Barber, 1996). The 1902 and 1944 Acts established the principle of subsidiarity, that is to say assigning tasks to the lowest level of

¹ The 1902 Act established state secondary schools and in 1904 the Board of Education issued regulations which prescribed the syllabus for pupils up to the age of sixteen or seventeen in schools. Hence Aldrich's (1988, 1996) argument that the "proposed national curriculum is at least 83 years old." (Aldrich, 1988:22).

government commensurate with effective execution (Editorial, *The Economist*, 1997: 19); which in this case were Local Education Authorities (LEAs). The 1988 Act reversed this principle and instead vested power in the hands of central government (Chitty, 1992, 1996; Lawton, 1996a; White, 1998).

Until 1988, the essentially local nature of the governance and management of schools meant that curriculum developments also tended to be local (White, 1998: 5). This was seen as a weakness by some politicians (Thatcher, 1993; Baker, 1993), particularly those who saw more centralised control as the key to raising standards. Nevertheless, equality of opportunity dictated that each pupil should enjoy a similar menu regardless of region, but by the early 1980s evidence was accumulating (such as that found in the HMI *National Survey of Secondary Education*, [DES, 1978]), that curriculum provision was uneven. There was also pressure from academic quarters for change. Some commentators, notably Denis Lawton, (1973) and John White (1973) had been advocating a form of standardisation for a considerable time.

Thus, when the National Curriculum was introduced, teachers and academics broadly welcomed it, at least in principle (O'Hear & White, 1993: 1). The practice, however, was quite different. The lack of 'synoptic' educational planning, which ignored several important questions including those to do with values and their interaction with the changing needs of maturing students, resulted in a grossly overcrowded curriculum. Despite this, it still contained gaps that were identified almost immediately, in addition to a system of pupil assessment that threatened to overwhelm the teaching and learning it was intended to support.

3.3 The Political Backdrop

In 1976 the then Prime Minister, James Callaghan, made a speech at Ruskin College Oxford in which he prompted a "Great Debate" on education. With hindsight, the Ruskin speech had considerable significance (though as Chitty shows [1989: 103], this was not universally acknowledged). In some ways it signified the end of a period of what Lawton describes as "pluralism", that is to say "different kinds of school and curricula for different types of children" (1996a: 2), which had developed after the 1944 Act and the expansion of state education for all. In some sense it also articulated, in a public way, the trend towards centralisation in education which had been gaining ground throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Not only was there a continuing move towards comprehensive schools by LEAs of both political

persuasions (the period that Lawton [1996a: 2] calls "comprehensive planning"),² but national bodies had also been created during the period to look at wider curriculum issues, starting with a small Curriculum Study Group in 1962, followed by the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations in 1964. In addition, Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) were increasingly using their experiences nationally to produce reflective papers³ which complemented material coming from university departments of education, such as Lawton's book *Social Change. Educational Theory and Curriculum Planning*, published in 1973.

Nevertheless, because of the devolved nature of education budgets, power and influence still rested with LEAs. To the incoming Conservative government in 1979, headed by Lady, then Mrs. Thatcher, this was frustrating. The Rate Support Grant from central government almost exactly matched LEA's expenditure on education (some £9 billion in 1986-87 money), and yet many LEAs were Labour controlled⁴ and thus opposed to the policies of their paymasters. This raised an issue of accountability (Lawson, 1992: 608), but also one of power. As Aldrich says, "....curriculum is not just a matter of content, but also of control" (Aldrich 1996: 24). In her autobiography written in 1993, Lady Thatcher was equally direct:

"The fact that since 1944 the only compulsory subject in the curriculum in Britain had been religious education reflected a healthy distrust of the state using central control of the syllabus as a means of propaganda. But that was hardly a risk now: the propaganda was coming from left-wing local authorities, teachers and pressure groups, not us." (Thatcher, 1993: 590)

Lady Thatcher's words reveal the extent to which she saw the need for centralisation as a first step in the defence against a fundamental threat to her beliefs - the next step, as we shall see below, would be to devolve power directly to the people (Lawton, 1994: 125). Such a reaction may be explained in part by her own background. When

² It is interesting, if somewhat ironic, that Mrs Thatcher, as education secretary, received 2,765 schemes for changing the status of a variety of types of schools into comprehensives. She rejected fewer than 5% of them. According to Hugo Young (1989), "Margaret Thatcher approved more schemes for comprehensive schools, and the abolition of more grammar schools, than any other Secretary of State before or since" (Young, 1989: 68).

³ One such was entitled *Curriculum 11-16* (1977), which outlined a common curriculum in secondary education to the age of 16, placing it within two contexts: one, schools and society and two, schools and the preparation for work. It also contains supplementary papers from HMI subject committees, including one on Economic Understanding (DES, 1997).

⁴ "The classic case was the left-dominated Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) which spent more per pupil than any other education authority and achieved some of the worst examination results" (Thatcher, 1993: 590).

Lady Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979, her only previous cabinet post had been as Education Secretary. As Hugo Young (1989) put it:

"This preparation was formative in three ways especially. The first was the discovery it permitted her to make of both the limits and the huge potential of a minister's power. A minister has to accept that certain enduring realities may be impossible to change. But a minister, equally, can sometimes gratify personal prejudices, so long as these are clearly worked out, with little intervention from anyone else. Power, as a means of acting out personal convictions, especially those rooted in personal experience, has always been a Thatcher trademark. The DES is where it is first sighted."

(Young, 1989: 68)

Thus, as Prime Minister, whose power greatly exceeds that of other Cabinet members, Lady Thatcher was able to exercise considerable influence over the school curriculum, basing her actions on long-held beliefs:

"I had always been an advocate of relatively small schools as against the giant, characterless comprehensives. I also believed that too many teachers were less competent and more ideological than their predecessors. I distrusted the new 'child centred' teaching techniques, the emphasis on imaginative engagement rather than learning facts, and the modern tendency to blur the lines of discrete subjects and incorporate them in wider, less definable entities like 'humanities'. And I knew from parents, employers and pupils themselves that too many people left schools without a basic knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic. But it would be no easy matter to change for the better what happened in schools."

(Thatcher, 1993: 590)

It is possible to see that many of the underlying principles of the National Curriculum as originally formulated, came into being because of the way Lady Thatcher viewed education. One might characterise her vision of it as 'disciplined' in a rather old fashioned sense, meaning that teaching would be confined to traditional subjects, using methods of instruction to impart a particular, narrow definition of knowledge. Lawton argues that this reflects what he calls a "Tory Mind" which is,

"....essentially cautious, backward -looking and parsimonious towards education. They (*sic.*) regret many developments of the modern world and prefer a more stable world picture some time in the past - myths are very powerful." (Lawton, 1994: 135)

and

"....the Tory Mind is also a product of history: of the democratization of England since Disraeli; of the loss of Empire since 1945. Their preferred solution is to look back and seek inspiration from traditional culture...." (*ibid.* : 144)

The fact that Lady Thatcher knew that changing what happened in schools would be no easy matter reflected her deep seated mistrust of LEAs, and in particular Labour dominated ones. At the same time her own instincts were to increase the power of parents and governors at the grass roots level, but in order to do that she felt it necessary to increase centralisation - a contradiction apparent in many areas of her administration⁵ - although in education, she argues, not to the extent that eventually manifested itself:

"I never believed, though, that the state should try to regiment every detail of what happened in schools. Some people argued that the French centralised system worked: but, whether it worked for France or not, such arrangements would not be acceptable in Britain. Here even the strictly limited objectives I set for the national curriculum were immediately seen by the vested interests in education as an opportunity to impose their own agenda." (Thatcher, 1993: 591)

The 'vested interests' to which Thatcher refers are somewhat surprising. Not teachers, nor teacher-educators, but instead HMI, officials at the DES and perhaps more predictably, the teacher unions (Thatcher, 1993).⁶ She wrote:

⁵ "Along with money, local government also lost powers. Education and housing, its core activities, were both reorganised in ways calculated to reduce or even exclude the concept of local democracy. In each case ministers were sensitive to this. They repelled the charge of centralisation by arguing that what they were doing was replacing the dead hand of bureaucracy with a more genuine form of local control. Power would drip down to the people, as tenants' co-operatives took over their own council flats and parent-governors replaced local politicians in deciding the fate of their children's schools" (Young, 1989: 538).

⁶ As we shall discover, someone else who was also determined to set his own agenda was Mrs Thatcher's own Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker. It would, however, be unseemly in a political autobiography to suggest such dissension between Cabinet colleagues.

"By contrast the national curriculum - the most important centralising measure - soon ran into difficulties. I never envisaged that we would end up with the bureaucracy and the thicket of prescriptive measures which eventually emerged. I wanted the DES to concentrate on establishing a basic syllabus for English, Mathematics and Science with simple tests to show what pupils knew....I had no wish to put good teachers in a strait jacket....In fact the original simplicity of the scheme had been lost and the influence of HMI and the teachers' unions was manifest."

(Thatcher, 1993: 593-594)

Many of the 'excesses', in truth, were the result of Kenneth Baker's influence as Secretary of State for Education and it is clear, not only from the autobiographies of Thatcher and Baker themselves, but also from other observers such as Nigel Lawson,⁷ then Chancellor of the Exchequer, that there was a fundamental disagreement between them as to the extent of the range of subjects to be included, as well as the way achievement was to be measured. As Baker put it:

"....the Prime Minister warned against over-elaboration of the Curriculum (*sic*) and said that she wanted to concentrate on the core subjects of English, maths and science. In the debates that took place between us....this proved to be the central issue. I believed that if we were to concentrate just upon the core subjects then schools would teach only to them and give much less prominence to the broader range which I felt was necessary."

(Baker, 1993: 193)

For Baker, as a graduate in history, it was important for children to leave school "with real knowledge of what has happened in our country over the last 1000 years....rather than being taught about dinosaurs for the second or third time" (*ibid.*). The reference to "our country" is an important one, to which we shall return in the section on values. Geography too "was in danger of disappearing into the less rigorous 'environmental

⁷ Nigel Lawson in his autobiography gives a fascinating insight into the process of debate within the Cabinet over the Educational Reform Act: "The Sub-Committee on Education Reform proceeded in a way unlike any on which I have served. The process would start by Margaret putting forward various ideas....and then there would be a general discussion....At the end of it, Margaret would sum up and give Kenneth his marching orders. He would then return to the next meeting with a worked out proposal which bore little resemblance to what everyone else recalled as having been agreed at the previous meeting, and owed rather more to his officials at the DES.

After receiving a metaphorical handbagging for his pains, he would then come back with something that corresponded more closely to her ideas, but as often as not without any attempt by his Department to work them out properly...." (Lawson, 1992: 609-610).

studies", whilst "our national record in foreign languages was abysmal....I wanted to ensure....the teaching of languages....up to the age of sixteen" (*ibid.*).

In two paragraphs on page 193 of his autobiography written in 1993, Baker also stated that he "wanted to ensure that every boy and girl took not just science but also technology up to the age of sixteen", and furthermore he, "....also wanted to include art, music and sport in the National Curriculum." There is no attempt to explain or justify this choice; the ultimate aims and objectives in terms of values are not articulated; and, at a more mundane level, neither is there mention of subjects such as economics, or even classics, which one might have expected to see had this simply been a list of subjects aping the curriculum found in many independent schools. In short, one sees at work the gratification of those "personal prejudices", which Young (1989: 68) identifies as one of the bonuses of being a Cabinet minister.

What is perhaps even more surprising than its apparently arbitrary nature, is that the debate over the content of the National Curriculum between Thatcher, Baker, the Cabinet and the DES, took place in the Spring of 1987, four or more months *after* it had been announced. The revelation that there was to be a National Curriculum at all was instructive. As Baker recalled:

"....the public had no idea that this was on the educational agenda. So I decided to tell them, but without first referring back to colleagues, which would have been usual before making such a major policy announcement. I did not want my curriculum proposals sunk in a mire of other people's individual memory or prejudice. To pre-empt this I decided to reveal the curriculum proposals on the Sunday television programme, 'Weekend World'....It was a gamble, but when I saw Margaret shortly afterwards she rather approved of this calculated bounce, a leaf out of her own book. 'Kenneth,' she said, 'never under-estimate the effectiveness of simply just announcing something.'" (Baker, 1993: 192-193)

The announcement was reinforced by Baker at the North of England Conference in January 1987, when he made no apology for the speed and lack of consultation with which the National Curriculum was to be introduced, and indeed went on the offensive:

"I realise that the changes I envisage are radical and far reaching and may, therefore, be unwelcome to those who value what is traditional

and familiar and has often served well in the past. But I believe profoundly that professional educators will do a disservice to the cause of education, and to the nation, if they entrench themselves in a defence of the *status quo*." (DES, 1987a)

Predictably, perhaps, the 'professional educators' in the form of the National Union of Teachers reacted by rejecting both the National Curriculum and testing at their Easter Conference in 1987,⁸ but this proved to be an irrelevance. A General Election was held in early summer and the Conservatives were re-elected for a third term, with the proposal for a National Curriculum an important, if ill-thought through plank of the overall platform (Lawson, 1992: 610).

The political argument between Margaret Thatcher, Kenneth Baker and other members of the Cabinet continued throughout the drafting of the Education Bill. According to Baker, this came to head in October, only three weeks before the Bill was to be introduced to Parliament, when he challenged the minutes of a Cabinet meeting. They stated that:

"....art and music should not be compulsory subjects and that the main curriculum should only take up 70 per cent of the time. Furthermore, attainment targets for all subjects other than the core should be dropped. I took the most unusual step of challenging these minutes....I was implying that the minutes reflected Margaret's personal views rather than the sense of the meeting."

(Baker, 1993: 196-7)

Lady Thatcher's version of the same events was somewhat different:

"The Cabinet sub-committee which I chaired to oversee the educational reforms decided that all the core and foundation subjects taken together should absorb no more than 70% of the curriculum. But, at Ken Baker's insistence, I agreed that this figure should not be publicly released - presumably it would have caused offence with the educational bureaucrats who were now ambitiously planning how each hour of school time should properly be spent."

(Thatcher, 1993: 594)

⁸ "It (the national curriculum) was the most sweeping reform of British (sic) education since the war, and it was to provoke five years of hostilities between the government and teachers." (Balen, 1994: 212)

The different positions of Thatcher and Baker, which Baker called "the long-running saga of 'Who's in charge of education'" (Baker, 1993: 196), was also apparent in the activities of the Subject Working Groups. These were set up to establish the detail for each subject. They met constant criticism. One was the History group, whose composition was "...personally determined" by Baker. "He decided that it should include only one primary and one secondary schoolteacher." (Aldrich, 1991: 2), and yet its interim report, published in January 1988, prompted the following reaction from the Prime Minister:

"I was appalled. It put the emphasis on interpretation and enquiry as against content and knowledge.....I considered the document comprehensively flawed and told Ken there must be major, not minor, changes." (Thatcher, 1993: 596)

The Groups themselves, consisting as they did of subject specialists working within very tight time constraints, found it difficult to remove content. Inevitably, each group over-loaded its proposed curriculum, with the result that when added together the prescribed material, alongside its associated tests, occupied far in excess of the 80 to 85% of the teaching time which it was supposed to. What hope, then, for subjects which were not even mentioned in the original proposals? Furthermore, by emphasising individual subjects, no effort was made to reflect upon the whole learning experience of individual pupils and to explore the values that might be acquired as a result.

Trying to fit this quart into a pint pot was the National Curriculum Council (NCC),⁹ which had been set up by the Act along with the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) based in London. The NCC was housed in York¹⁰, and

⁹ The NCC was formed out of the School Curriculum Development Committee (SCDC), which was half funded by local authority associations and half by the Government. Unsurprisingly, therefore, given the Conservative government's views on local authorities, the SCDC was axed by Baker. Perhaps recognising that its days were numbered, the SCDC's response to the National Curriculum consultation document is instructive: "First and most important the specifications of the National Curriculum is in terms of *traditional subjects* throughout the years 5-16 and the recommendations of programmes of study will be the responsibility of subject working groups. By contrast there has been a recognition in recent years that traditional subjects alone are not an adequate vehicle for conveying the knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes required by pupils who will be living and working in the last years of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first. The consequences of specifying the National Curriculum in subjects rather than in the now familiar areas of learning and experience or in terms of broad curriculum aims are a recurrent theme in this SCDC response." (SCDC, 1987: para 4. Emphasis in original.)

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that the decision to locate in York was the NCC's Chairman and Chief Executive, Duncan Graham's: "The night I was appointed I told Baker that the site of the headquarters would have to be of my choosing. The civil servants agreed that there was no absolute necessity for NCC to be based in London, a decision which they came to regret...The reasons for choosing York were partly personal, but I was also beginning to have the first glimmer of what it was going to be like

the physical distance of the NCC from the centre of power added to the suspicions felt by DES officials of the work the Council was doing (Baker, 1993:198, Graham, 1993:10, Barber, 1996:52).

Duncan Graham had been appointed chair of the NCC by Kenneth Baker because of his "down-to-earth, very Scottish approach. He was not in thrall to the prejudices of academics, and the fact that we have a national curriculum at all owes much to his dogged determination" (Baker, 1993:198). Unfortunately Graham did not feel that he received the degree of support which he needed or deserved from the three Ministers whom he served: Kenneth Baker, John MacGregor and Kenneth Clarke. He also believed that civil servants were jealous of the NCC and in particular his access to Ministers (Graham, 1993:12,21), and that HMI had its own agenda which did not coincide with his.¹¹

The running battles which Graham had with the civil service in particular, run throughout his autobiography. For instance:

"I became acutely aware that in its implementation and substance this was a Civil Service driven curriculum and not the property of HMI. This was the first evidence of a huge *de facto* power shift in the way education was controlled in England and Wales. The HMI were adjuncts and the inspectors on the working group were extremely helpful, but they were not the driving force: that was the civil servants. The national curriculum was their baby, the first major educational reform in Britain that had not been created by the educational professionals." (Graham, 1993: 30)

This came to a head when Baker sent a letter to Graham telling him to suspend work on the so-called cross curricular themes, which had themselves been hurriedly created by the NCC to cover those areas omitted from Kenneth Baker's original list.¹²

to live with the civil servants who became involved in the strong lobby for joint London offices for the National Curriculum Council and the School Examination and Assessment Council (SEAC).' (Graham, 1993:10) This may have been naive of Graham. Commentators noted the physical proximity of Peter Mandelson's office to Tony Blair's after the 1997 election. This was compared with that of John Prescott's, the Deputy Prime Minister, which was in another building. By implication, Prescott was perceived as being less influential.

¹¹ According to Graham, HMI in 1988 felt that they could influence the national curriculum in the way they had done traditionally, but that by 1990 the most pressing objective was their own survival. (Graham, 1993: 99).

¹² "It became apparent that, by deciding on ten statutory subjects, many knowledge areas and educational experiences thriving in schools were in danger of being crowded out of the curriculum" (Radnor, 1994: 20).

Although this instruction was reversed following a personal appeal by Graham to Baker, suspicions remained:

"....and at NCC's next meeting a senior civil servant made a speech stressing the council's independence. Cynics might believe that in the same way as football managers are given a vote of confidence before being sacked, the council ceased to have any real independence once it had been assured of its independence."

(Graham, 1993: 21)

Graham was indeed eventually sacked¹³ by Kenneth Clarke, who was "exasperated by the amount of complex detail in the curriculum" (Baker, 1993: 198; McSmith 1994: 190).

According to Baker, it was always his intention that the NCC¹⁴ should eventually be merged with SEAC (Baker, 1993:198). When this happened and the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) was formed, there was a feeling that there had been a winner and a loser, as signified by the closing of the York offices and a move into SEAC's in London. Certainly, as we shall see with reference to the developments examined later in chapters four and five, over time SCAA appeared far more concerned with assessment than curriculum, and this in turn has had a profound effect.

3.4 The Academic Response

The irony of the specifics of the ten-subject 1988 National Curriculum was not lost on the academic world. In *Bedford Way Papers/33 The National Curriculum*, writers expressed their dismay at the high-jacking of the principle of a national curriculum, which some had advocated for many years, but which in its appearance was far removed from the one they had envisaged. As Lawton put it,

"One of the problems opponents of the Education Reform Bill face is the difficulty of saying why they accept the principle of a national curriculum but reject the specific form it has taken...An important

¹³ Or, according to Graham, "I decided that the time had come for pastures new" (Graham, 1993: 115).

¹⁴ Again Graham's account differs from that of Baker's: "One of my concerns was whether the council would have a continuing role or be disbanded once the curriculum had been introduced. Baker's response was quite explicit....He said the council had been set up by statute and it would require another to disband it." (Graham, 1993: 95).

reason for this confusion is that the clothes of the educational left have been stolen by the political Right." (Lawton, 1988: 10)

John White's contribution to the Bedford Way Paper, "An Unconstitutional National Curriculum" was a withering attack:

"It's amazing how wrong one can be. It is nearly twenty years since I began arguing for a national curriculum. In all that time, I have been assuming that once the need for such a curriculum had been established and people began to think about its more determinate shape, they would be embarking on a pretty complex task.... I now feel a complete idiot. As the government's proposals show, devising a national curriculum is simplicity itself. You pick ten foundation subjects to fill 80-90 per cent of the school timetable, highlight three as of particular importance and arrange for tests at different ages. I could have worked out the national curriculum years ago. Anyone could." (White, 1988a: 113)

In another article White (1988b) further developed the argument for values to be incorporated in the planning process. He drew an interesting, and for Conservative politicians, an uncomfortable parallel between Stalin's National Curriculum and the 1988 English version. Both have almost identical subjects. The difference, White argued, must be in the preparation that the overall curriculum offers young people:

"A minimum test of its commitment is whether it includes in its goals preparing all young people to become equal citizens of a democracy. There is nothing in the Baker curriculum about this - nothing about the prerequisite understanding of the socio-economic structure or the principles of democracy, about fostering the virtues necessary in democratic citizens, about equipping people for critical reflection on the status quo, or about building the imperfect democratic structures we have now into something more adequate." (White, 1988b: 37)

Of particular importance to this thesis is White's reference to the need for aims and objectives to be worked out in advance so that the values that society deems appropriate are the ones that go forward, and this is an approach that White continues to advocate for consideration in any revised national curriculum to be introduced in the year 2000 and beyond (White, 1998). When Baker (1988: 193) said "I also wanted to include art, music and sport" he did not seek to justify this choice, because

he presumably felt he did not need to; the subjects are those that most people would consider essential to learners maturing and developing towards the goal of becoming well rounded individuals. But nothing is that simple. Determining which parts of our culture we want to pass on is far from uncontroversial; we need, indeed must decide on our aims in advance, specifically in terms of their values. But as White points out when describing the creation of a national curriculum which he had originally in mind,

"(The developers)...would have to work out a coherent and defensible set of overall aims, examine what sub-aims, or intermediate aims, these might generate on logical, psychological and other grounds, bear in mind the wide variety of ways by which aims might be realised, try to work out criteria delimiting the role of central government from that of local government, governing bodies and schools." (White, 1988a: 113)

In effect, all that appeared in the National Curriculum concerning aims and values was contained in paragraph 4:

"....policies for the school curriculum which will develop the potential for all pupils and equip them for the responsibilities of citizenship and for the challenge of employment in the tomorrow's world." (DES, 1987b: para. 4)

For those in the economics and business community this appeared to be a cast-iron justification for their subjects' inclusion. The mystery then, was that they did not appear; but neither did citizenship, nor personal development, nor indeed any area of study that might be followed if the aims were to be translated into achievable outcomes. Of course, the underlying problem was that aims such as these are so vague as to be open to a variety of interpretations, even for those subjects included within the 'ten subjects'. As White says:

"There was no word on how these aims were supposed to provide a rationale for the foundation subjects....Nobody said in 1988; and nobody knows now." (White, 1998: 7)

The emphasis on "subjects" ignored the entire plethora of activities that go on in schools and which together form an essential part of the learning process. Teachers have their own aims (not always necessarily clearly articulated) that are translated into

action in a variety of ways. Team teaching with colleagues from other disciplines, project work, even the "school ethos and organisation...the list could go on and on." (White, 1988a:115).

3.5 Education Values and Ideology

It is axiomatic that ideologies underpin political policies. In the case of Lady Thatcher's administration, the dominant one was a strong belief in monetarism, and connected with that, the benefits of the 'free market'. In the 1970s and 1980s both of these were strongly held and influential economic theories, most closely associated with Milton Friedman and the 'Chicago School'. Given the apparent power of these theories one might reasonably assume that knowledge of them would be high on the government's educational agenda. Yet by ignoring economics and business, this was shown not to be the case.

Value positions are again important in explaining this apparent contradiction. Economics is a social science based on critique. When taught effectively¹⁵ it opens up to students the possibilities of combining the factors of production in a variety of different ways, and suggests that our method of organising wealth creation and distribution is not the only one. It illustrates, using historical examples, the outcomes of alternative economic experiments in different countries at different times. Although one can be critical of its positivism (see chapter nine), economics insists that policy options are presented in as open a way as possible. It is then up to society to decide on the one best suited to maximise utility.¹⁶ The emphasis throughout is on a choice¹⁷ between alternatives. For politicians such as Kenneth Baker and Margaret Thatcher, who were, by 1988, used to massive majorities in the House of Commons and little or no effective opposition, the act of questioning principles might be seen as subversive.¹⁸

¹⁵ I deliberately choose the word 'effectively'. Gilbert (1984: 129) argued that the theory of economics - especially that taught in schools - resulted in an "....uncritical acceptance of the images dictated by the theory. It is seldom asked what historical factors have produced the ideas of property, entrepreneurship, labour or government on which the theory is based."

¹⁶ I use the term 'utility' as it is defined by economists i.e. satisfaction, not happiness.

¹⁷ It is interesting to note how the word 'choice' was often used by right-wing politicians, especially in the 1980s, to mean a kind of unfettered laissez faire capitalism that apparently offered 'freedom' through the market place. Thus, Keith Joseph, Mrs. Thatcher's mentor, was "at heart a privateer" (Lawton, 1988: 16), who really wanted all education privatised. Only his civil servants managed to persuade him otherwise when he was Secretary of State for Education.

¹⁸ Michael Barber suggests that civil servants in the DES were also infected with the bug which brooks no opposition. He writes: "But the civil servants involved in the National Curriculum were a new breed. They were young...., and ideologically committed to the government agenda. At meetings they turned up and ended debates not through the quality of their argument, but by saying 'Ministers

The lack of effective opposition may have been crucial. It is unsurprising, in an essentially combative political system such as the one which operates in Great Britain, that, when a single political party becomes dominant and faces little or no threat from outside, it turns in on itself; factional argument prevails. As we have already discovered, there was clearly a distance between Kenneth Baker and Margaret Thatcher which was largely ideological, and when one considers the Thatcher period as signalling the end of consensus politics (if such a concept ever, in practice, existed), then the debate over the National Curriculum becomes one of political infighting. For those on the right of the Conservative Party there was an internal contradiction about a government which *in extremis* argued for free markets everywhere and yet was prescribing to a huge extent what went on in every classroom across the country (Lawton, 1994). Sir Keith Joseph, Kenneth Baker's predecessor, was riven by this conundrum; in all his time as education secretary never once did he argue for more funds for education during the annual Treasury round because, as a monetarist, he was determined to do all he could to keep public expenditure down. His influence as Lady Thatcher's mentor had a profound effect; hence her desire to limit intervention in what went on in schools. As Graham put it:

"Mrs. Thatcher was in favour of the three-subject curriculum of mathematics, English and science. Kenneth Baker, who had succeeded Joseph ...in May 1986, was quite determined not to be saddled with anything that was so right wing, so nihilistic and negative, and argued successfully for the more respectable broader, ten-subject curriculum." (Graham, 1993: 6)

One interesting point, not recognised by Graham, is that the pragmatic curriculum he and Baker created was in many senses just as negative. It may have been unintentional (Bolton, 1993: 47), but the detailed, over burdensome specifics by which the chosen subjects were defined stifled creativity, and their assessment did little more than add more bureaucracy to teachers' working lives. In effect the National Curriculum was simply a personal view of what was 'broad and balanced', a view as valid or as invalid as anyone else's. Mine would be, for example, that in order to be broad and balanced it would have to include an explicit economics/business dimension, but I fully accept that this would not be everyone's view and I would have to argue the case. The point about the Baker curriculum was that such a debate never took place (White, 1988: 6).

could not countenance' whatever it was. Sometimes they behaved like Millwall fans in suits." (Barber, 1996: 167).

One fundamental question remains. Why, from the late 1970s onwards, did education suddenly achieve such a high profile? After all, the UK's economy has been developing less quickly than its major competitors for at least one hundred years, so why was comparatively little attention paid to education in earlier times?

One of the possible explanations is that the post of Education Secretary has never been seen as one of the great Offices of State - Lady Thatcher remains the only holder to have become Prime Minister. Indeed it may be that Kenneth Clarke's ambition to lead the Conservative Party was irretrievably damaged by his appointment (McSmith, 1994: 179-180), but both he and Baker knew they had to use the position at least to maintain their profile and influence, and that meant appeasing the then powerful right-wing of the Conservative Party.

At the same time the British political context as a whole has been altering, brought about by changes in relationships with Europe and the globalisation of economics. Power is inexorably shifting towards Brussels, and major decisions on foreign and economic policy can no longer be taken in isolation. As a result, it is inevitable that politicians turn their attention towards areas where their influence can be felt and where they believe they can have a significant impact. Education therefore has taken an increasingly central position, and especially given the size of its budget, it has been regarded as an economic policy lever and a means of effecting change, rather than 'simply' as a desirable end in itself.

3.6 From 1988 to the Dearing Report

The *practical* difficulties that followed the original National Curriculum were soon in evidence. The curriculum was overloaded with content and yet, ironically, contained omissions (*inter alia* O'Hear & White, 1993: 2; Norwich, 1993: 79-87; MacGilchrist, 1993: 120-126); the subject content was over prescriptive but at the same time contentious (*inter alia* Graham, 1993: 48,121; Balen, 1994: 212); the ambitious assessment regime was over complicated and time consuming and yet was not particularly reliable, much less valid (*inter alia*, Black, 1993: 68; Gipps, 1993: 54-56; Chitty, 1996: 39; Daugherty 1995; Lawton, 1996a: 11); and finally, the juxtaposition of the National Curriculum and GCSEs at Key Stage Four¹⁹ was never properly addressed (Graham, 1993; Tate, 1998).

¹⁹ Duncan Graham devoted a full chapter in his autobiography to what he called "The Nightmare of Key Stage Four" (Graham, 1993: 83-94). From 1 August 1998 schools were allowed to 'dis-apply' the National Curriculum requirements for two out of three subjects - specifically, Modern Foreign

The National Curriculum of 1988, as we have seen, was essentially a top-down curriculum imposed on schools by politicians and civil servants (Lawton, 1996a: 13; White, 1998: 6). Teachers and other educational professionals were barely consulted either during its construction or its implementation. Despite this it was introduced into, and adopted by schools; resistance was sporadic and ineffective. There are a number of reasons for such apparent acquiescence. First, the profession had suffered from a great deal of criticism during the period of the Conservative administration and morale was at a low ebb. Second, there was ample evidence from privatisation and policies directed at the Health Service and coal mining, that the government could and would force through legislation whatever the affected work-force thought and said. Third, the teachers' unions could not agree a common strategy and were in any case on the defensive, in the same way as the whole trade union movement throughout the 1980s. Fourth, the economy was moving into recession in 1988, creating a labour force locked into geographical immobility as a result of falling house prices, negative equity and repossessions. This meant that alternatives to teaching were few. Finally, there was an underlying feeling, as we have seen, that the notion of a national curriculum was right in principle.

By 1993 the situation had changed. Politically the Conservative Government was far less strong under John Major. It had unexpectedly won the 1992 General Election, but with a reduced (and shrinking) majority in the House of Commons, and Major himself was a different being to Lady Thatcher. In the popular culture, values were changing: the materialism of the 1980s had given way to the so-called 'caring 90s'.

In schools the practicalities of implementing the assessment regime in particular, appeared to be distracting teachers away from their primary function. This was a point not lost on parents, many of whom supported the boycotts of Stage 1 and Stage 3 English testing in 1993. Given such a powerful alliance, the Secretary of State for Education, by this time John Patten, brought in Sir Ron Dearing as chair of SCAA to revise the National Curriculum.

When Sir Ron Dearing reported in 1993 and 1994, there was praise for the way in which he had reduced the content overload and made the assessment more manageable. Nevertheless, the Dearing Report was essentially a compromise

Language and/or Design & Technology and/or Science. This change was approved by the Secretary of State under the provisions of the 1996 Education Act. Taken with others to the Primary Curriculum announced in the Spring of 1998, there are indications that, depending on one's viewpoint, ten years on the original National Curriculum is either in the process of unravelling, or is simply becoming more rational and workable.

designed in part, to placate the teaching profession (Daugherty, 1995: 171). Thus, the purpose of testing was unresolved (Chitty, 1996: 51) as well as two connected issues directly related to this thesis. First, that of *subjects* and second that of a broad and balanced curriculum, especially at Key Stage Four.

3.7 The Issue of 'Subjects'

Whilst neither business studies nor economics were included in the original list of the ten-subject National Curriculum, 'Economic and Industrial Understanding' was, in the form of a 'Cross Curricular Theme'. *Curriculum Guidance 4: Education for Economic and Industrial Understanding* makes interesting reading in this context:

"Education for economic and industrial understanding is an essential part of every pupil's curriculum. It helps pupils understand the world in which they live and prepares them for life and work in a rapidly changing, economically competitive world. It is needed in all key stages." (NCCa, 1990: Foreword)

and

"Education for economic and industrial understanding is clearly required if schools are to provide a curriculum which promotes the aims defined in the Education Reform Act" (*ibid.*: 1)

Economic and industrial understanding, along with the other cross curricular themes: citizenship, environment, health education and careers education and guidance were specified by the National Curriculum Council (NCCb, 1990), in order to respond to the criticism that the ten subject menu did not provide a broad and balanced curriculum (Lawton, 1996a: 34). However, the fact that they appeared as an afterthought, were not assessed and in any case that there was so little room available in the timetable (Hargreaves, 1991: 36), condemned them to obscurity, or at best, a marginal presence (Rowe & Whitty, 1993; Whitty, 1994). As Lawton expresses it:

"...the national curriculum was unfortunately framed without including a social science dimension: the opportunity of including economic understanding in the national curriculum for all pupils was missed." (Lawton, 1996a: 38)

From the evidence of Kenneth Baker's autobiography, he clearly believed at the time that the subjects chosen *did* cover all that was required. And yet the Senior Chief Inspector of HMI, Eric Bolton, who was praised by Baker for his help with the framing of the National Curriculum, was in charge of an organisation that for several years had been challenging the supremacy of conventional subjects and instead was emphasising "areas of experience", which "could be realised through a familiar-looking programme of single subjects, or through forms of interdisciplinary work, or with a combination of both; or it could lead to novel groupings and titles of subjects" (DES, 1977: 6). In the end, as we have seen, all this was lost in the Act. It is therefore somewhat mysterious why Eric Bolton became such an advocate of the narrow subject prescription which emerged.

Bolton (1993) argued that it was necessary, for purely practical reasons, to set out the ten subject national curriculum into those subjects which are familiar to all.

"As for the National Curriculum itself, once the government decided to move into legislation, quite regardless of its political nature and views, it had a particular problem to face: the drafting of legislation, because if it is to become law, it needs to be as commonly understood and as unambiguous as possible. This requirement calls for precision and specificity in the drafting of the Bill.

Consequently, even if the areas of experience, or indeed any other sort of description of the school curriculum, had been possible in practice, they would create severe difficulties for the Parliamentary draughtsmen when setting out the legislation. It is possible to be clear about what is commonly meant and understood by the terms 'mathematics' and 'history' to a degree that is not possible with terms such as 'humanities' or 'social studies'. (Bolton, 1993: 47)

This really is a specious argument, for a number of reasons. First, it is highly debatable, as was shown by the activities of the subject working groups and subsequent criticism of their activities, whether it is or is not possible to be clear about what conventional subjects 'mean'.²⁰ As we shall see in later chapters, curriculum innovation is, amongst other things, about changing the nature of the subject: to

²⁰ As far back as 1977, HMI, of which Eric Bolton was such an important part, wrote: "It is not particularly difficult to advocate and indeed implement...the notion of English, mathematics and science as a compulsory core....This, however, merely begins an educational discussion and does not provide a programme. What English? What mathematics? What science?" (DES, 1977: 5).

update its content, reflect new areas of interest, incorporate changing values and so on.

Second, it *is* possible to define other subject areas, albeit with the same caveat as has just been applied to conventional ones. Even General Studies, perhaps the widest 'subject' of them all, is discrete. In order to be assessed it has to have an examination syllabus which define its content in exactly the same way as English, history and physics. Indeed this is the logic behind SCAA's (now QCA's) definition of subject cores at Advanced level and subject criteria at GCSE.

Third, should a national curriculum be defined to suit the convenience of Parliamentary draughtsmen? After all, as Bolton himself wrote in the paragraph following the one above:

"The law does not say anything about how a subject is to be organised; it does not insist that subjects should be taught as separate subjects, nor does the law have anything to say about the methodology, or teaching material to be used." (Bolton, 1993: 47-48)

But this is little more than rhetoric. By defining the ten subjects and applying rigorous and complicated assessment regimes, schools, even had they wished to be innovative, were faced with far too much detail to absorb, without creating more confusion by challenging conventional subject boundaries.²¹

Nevertheless it is naive to suggest that the subject based curriculum can be changed overnight, or even within a generation. Paul Hirst (1993) argued that the importance that we place on knowledge requires us to go to the nation's depositories of scholarship, namely university departments. They are almost uniformly organised upon traditional subject lines and so knowledge, distilled to an appropriate level, is handed down to students in schools within a similar structure. Hirst called this the "rationalist approach to curriculum planning" (Hirst, 1993: 33). The disciples of this system are the secondary teachers. Those with good subject degrees are highly valued,²² more so than those with degrees in education. They often possess a burning desire to teach 'their' subject; attempts to reduce subject specialisation are often met

²¹ "The notion that the plethora of objectives from all the subjects and themes, spelt out in pretty tight detail under ordered and staged categories, with many of them tested under such categories, could be imaginatively and defensibly reorganised into a scheme to suit the unique circumstances of particular institutions and individuals is surely megalomaniac." (Hirst, 1993: 32)

²² OFSTED inspections of teacher-training courses examine the level of degree of entrants as a way of measuring quality.

with suspicion and some resistance. Schools are similarly organised upon subject lines and teachers' careers, at least initially, are build upon a subject base. Internationally, and adding to this inertia, there appears to be an agreed set of subjects across countries, which Haydon calls a "canon of subjects" (Haydon, 1997: 13). Whilst they can be challenged, they are undoubtedly well entrenched and offer stiff resistance to change (Goodson, 1988). Taken together, this makes it all the harder for 'new' subjects such as economics and business to gain a toehold in the curriculum, whatever their worth and whatever the extent of their 'congruence' to the values of society.

Whilst the Dearing Reforms (Dearing 1993, 1994) made some room in the curriculum to allow for creative combinations, the existence of 'core' subjects ensures their primacy continues. As Lawton puts it:

"The national curriculum post-Dearing is as subject based as ever, and teachers will still find it difficult to fill in the gaps between subjects. One of the fundamental problems of the national curriculum had simply been ignored." (Lawton, 1996a: 73)

As we shall see, both the Business and Information Studies Project (chapter four) and the Nuffield Economics and Business Project (chapter five) draw from two complementary subject areas to bring a new dimension to Business Education, whilst at the Institute of Education there is an attempt to move training teachers forward in their thinking about the potential of 'subjects' in the traditional sense²³. Despite these efforts, it is most likely that such incremental change is the only way forward, however.

3.8 Values and the National Curriculum

It is clear from the political evidence outlined above, that both Kenneth Baker and Margaret Thatcher had a fundamentally instrumental views of education. They were more concerned "about what education is *for* rather than what it *is*." (Kelly, 1990: 46). That is unsurprising, especially when one reflects upon the historic context in which the National Curriculum was framed. The 1980s was a decade characterised by a materialistic culture, where young, apparently barely qualified people in their early

²³ Those training to become teachers of economics, business studies and geography at the Institute undertake some work together under the umbrella of an academic 'grouping' known as Education, Environment and Economy.

twenties could earn more in a year in the City than many teachers could earn in ten, and at the same time be praised for their contribution to the wealth of the nation, whilst their counterparts working in classrooms were condemned for contributing to falling standards. The value base was, for many, distorted.

On the other hand, as Barber (1996) points out, the argument over 'process' - how children learn - as opposed to product - what they come out with "was a debate more suited to medieval philosophers than twentieth century education professionals..." (Barber, 1996: 165), with the process lobby representing the left-wing, and the product lobby, the right. Such polarisation produced the Kenneth Baker emphasis on learning 'facts', facts which can then be assessed within a conventional subject framework. However, as White (1993: 10) has pointed out, there is no attempt to justify why fact accumulation *per se* is important. Knowledge is acquired in order to inform, to offer alternatives and to help people question. It is possible, of course, for individuals to have different views of what knowledge is, what the underlying values are and what we desire to "pass on".²⁴ As Blenkin *et al* put it:

"If we have different views of knowledge, we will adopt different approaches to education. Conversely, if we have different views of education, this must imply that we have different views of knowledge (or that we have given insufficient thought to both). Thus a National Curriculum which prestates, predetermines and predefines its content and its 'aims and objectives' cannot be compatible with a view of knowledge as evolutionary or of change as continuous and inevitable, or indeed, with any fundamentally viable concept of democracy." (Blenkin *et. al.* 1992: 26-27)

Furthermore, facts are not accumulated in isolation. As Hirst expressed it:

"Of its nature knowledge and understanding is always generated in relation to relevant skills, attitudes and values. The elements come all of a package in areas of human living and not as dismembered items to be discretely mastered and then put together."

(Hirst, 1993: 34)

²⁴ Graham Haydon offers an interesting view of what education is in a values context: "...when I argue....that values education should, precisely, be *Education*, I shall mean that it should not be indoctrination or (mere) habit forming or training, but it should be concerned, above all, with knowledge, understanding and rational thought." (Haydon, 1997: 15. Emphasis in original.)

History is not, nor should be, hermetically sealed from geography, nor English from science, nor indeed any subject from the playground or other life experiences. The fact that the 1988 National Curriculum reinforced, in a crude way, the subject divisions of the school curriculum is, I suggest, one of the fundamental reasons why it faced such a barrage of criticism as has been described in this chapter and why it has been subject to change almost from its inception. There is ample evidence that it was politically inspired and that it was largely the work of Kenneth Baker and Margaret Thatcher, who were themselves reflecting, at least in part, the views and values of similar like-minded groups.²⁵ That said, however, it has to be admitted that neither Thatcher nor Baker (although he did change his views over time) made a secret of their values, and indeed the Conservatives were elected on the basis of at least some of them. Lawton's *"Tory Mind"* (1994) perceptions of education, like many of their policies, saw the past as a template of excellence, as a time when British society was predominantly white-skinned, where women stayed at home to look after the children and where the working class conformed to a particular code of behaviour. The educational philosophy that they espoused owed much to Professor Anthony O'Hear who prefers "an education which encourages an acceptance of traditional values and culture" (Lawton, 94: 127) above one which encourages students to question received opinion and values. That being so it is possible to explain why the original National Curriculum not only placed such an emphasis on English history and literature but also why it was "'race' and gender-blind" (Ghaill, 1993: 136). It also explains why the content was made so prescriptive; teachers could not be trusted - if allowed the space they would inevitably 'subvert' the material by introducing topics that questioned its values.

The Baker curriculum represented one view of what society wanted passed on, but it was inappropriate and teachers, especially in multi-racial and multi-cultural schools knew it (Slater, 1991; Watts, 1992: 142). The values children were increasingly bringing to their classrooms in such schools simply did not match those their teachers were required to transmit. This was immediately apparent and so adjustments to the curriculum were made. Thus, if the question was posed, 'why has economics been ignored?', the answer was "Economic and Industrial Understanding", which was publicised in 1990. Similarly, if the question was 'why is there no citizenship education?' another cross-curricular theme would be produced, and so on. If the question concerned missing elements within an existing subject, the answer might be what was termed, "Non-statutory Guidance". In the case of History and the controversy surrounding its Anglo-centredness, for instance, such guidance was

²⁵ Such as the Institute of Economic Affairs, the Centre for Policy Studies and the Hillgate Group, though their views and policy prescriptions were by no means homogenous.

published by the National Curriculum Council in 1991 (NCC, 1991). The document spoke of the need to ensure that not just political but also economic, technological and scientific, social, religious, cultural and aesthetic history were to be studied. Thus curriculum 'holes' were successively 'filled', but since the pint pot was already attempting to hold a quart, this simply added to the overflow.

3.9 Maturation, Values and the 1988 National Curriculum

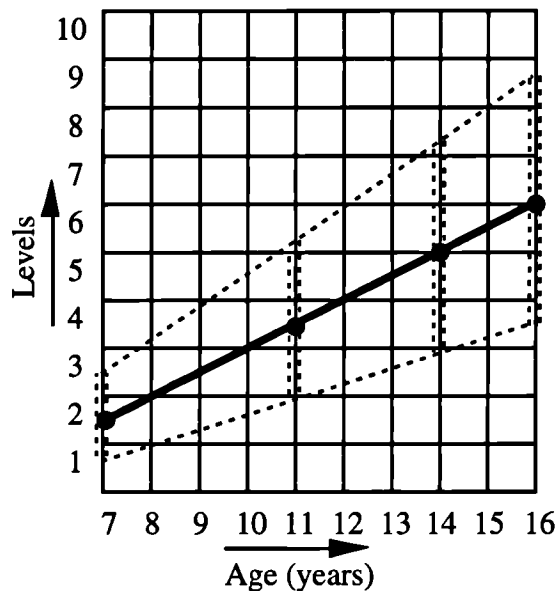
It is not relevant to this dissertation to examine the assessment regime associated with the National Curriculum in detail, but it is necessary to dwell on it briefly, because of its connection to the issue of the developing young person. The Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT), which reported in January 1988, was required to cover a number of objectives (DES, 1988: Appendix B), some of which were conflicting (Murphy, 1990: 37-47; Chitty, 1996: 39). On the one hand it was politically imperative that test data was available in order to ensure accountability as well as offering parents 'informed' choices. On the other, the tests were supposed to monitor and improve pupil progress and achievement. There was then, a confusion between the aims and objectives of the tests, most particularly whether they were summative or formative. In one respect, however, there was agreement between educationalists and the political right, and that was the use of criterion referencing. The theoretical arguments for criterion referencing were persuasive, but their practical application was beset with difficulties, as overseas experience had already shown (Daugherty, 1995: 178). We shall examine the challenges facing designers of assessment criteria in more detail in chapter six but as Wolf explains it in the context of vocational qualifications:

"The more serious and rigorous the attempts to specify the domains being assessed, the narrower the domain itself becomes, without, in fact, becoming fully transparent. The attempt to map out free-standing content and standards leads, again and again, to a never-ending spiral of specifications." (Wolf, 1995a: 55)

Describing attainment in science exemplifies this problem. The first set of proposals from the Science Working Group contained no fewer than 354 statements of attainment grouped into ten levels in each of twenty two separate attainment targets.

Part of the problem of defining attainment was that the statements were entirely unrelated to age, so ten "levels of attainment" were described. In theory a child aged

seven could be at level ten and one aged sixteen at level one. Yet it was self evident that children would improve through their years of schooling, so a line was drawn to represent a "median" child's progress, with bands either side to represent the likely spread of 80% of the students at each Key Stage. The following diagram (figure 3.1) was used to clarify the position:



Source: TGAT Report, DES, 1987

Fig 3.1. The relationship between age and levels of attainment

It could be argued therefore that, in a very limited sense, the 1988 National Curriculum did take growing maturity into account. But this was only in the context of tests that would be sat by pupils at the "Key Stages", when they were aged seven, eleven, fourteen and sixteen (the last one, at Key Stage Four, was meant to meld with GCSEs). At each Stage students had to meet "attainment targets" in their "programmes of study", the latter being mainly content based. Within what were described as "expected" results, there was, necessarily, an allowance for different levels of performance because of course, the criteria were not age related. So,

"Children would progress through the 'levels' regardless of their chronological age. Thus in any age-grouped class of children, some individuals would be working towards higher levels than others."

(Fowler, 1990: 26)

In theory this sounds highly attractive, though the challenge of that degree of classroom differentiation might seem daunting. Furthermore, as Daugherty says:

"Most pre-existing assessment systems, in the UK as elsewhere in the world, were age-related. The TGAT view of progression....not only presented the system-designers with the challenge of defining attainment criteria. Those who were given the job of drafting the criteria would also have to write them in such a way that they could be used in describing the performance of a pupil of any age between 5 and 16." (Daugherty, 1995: 178)

Crucially, though, because the system was criterion referenced *and unrelated* to the child's age, it would not lend itself to reliable reporting at the end of each Key Stage. Thus, by ignoring the growing maturity of the learner, the assessment process failed to achieve one of its main political aims, that of offering clear comparisons.

In essence the system was unworkable, despite efforts by teachers and politicians to make it so. As we saw above, by 1993 the pressure within schools could no longer be contained, and this resulted in the Dearing Review (Dearing, 1994), which substantially slimmed down the National Curriculum both in terms of content and assessment.

Lawton argues (1996) that fundamentally the National Curriculum confused one curriculum model based on subject content, with another based on assessment. Furthermore "....it was never made clear where either came from: the underlying aims and values were not specified" (Lawton, 1996: 8). For the purposes of the present discussion, the lack of underlying aims is crucial. The treatment of values was not, and indeed could not be integrated with maturity in any deeply considered sense because, as we have seen, the treatment of values was not considered deeply either and growing maturity was only seen in the context of test results. If it is impossible to have a clear idea of what the 'educated' person will look like when he or she *leaves* school, it is clearly impossible to have a clear idea of what he or she might look like *during* their schooling. Slater demonstrated this neatly in his reference to the Final Report of the History Working Group:

"In the short section 'History and Values' we read that 'teachers should not hold back from dealing with controversial questions on morality or values which unite or divide....material should be introduced at a time when pupils have sufficient maturity to possess the critical faculties to handle it appropriately.' We find a clutch of concealed assumptions here. It is assumed there *is* a generally

recognised level of maturity characterized by an understood appropriateness, although for whom and for what is not stated. It also assumes that young people, whatever their experiences of life may have been, have insufficient maturity to cope with related moral issues and value judgements and that, presumably, the adult world in general, and teachers and educators in particular, constantly demonstrate their ability to do so."

(Slater, 1991: 17. Emphasis in original.)

History has consistently proved to be one of the most contentious subjects in the National Curriculum. This is because there is nothing intrinsically difficult about learning an historical 'fact' (although, of course, there is often a debate about whether or not it is a *fact*). So, allowing for maturity or personal development in history by basing it on content is a false premise (Chitty, 1996: 45), but one not appreciated by politicians, especially if their values coincided with the ones expressed by John Major at the Conservative Women's Conference in June 1993:

"People say there is too much jargon, so let me give you some of my own: knowledge, discipline, tables, dates, Shakespeare, British history, standards, English grammar, spelling, marks, tests and good manners." (quoted in Lawton, 1994: 109)

An important question, then, is whether we have moved on in terms of considering values, maturity and the curriculum since 1988. Dr. Nick Tate, chief executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority²⁶ is reflective:

"....I don't think very systematically what we plan to teach is based on an objective view of knowledge or applied knowledge of how children develop and how they mature with age. There are bits in the jigsaw where that is done, but of course the knowledge is highly partial and sometimes highly contested as well, and so the steers and the directions are not terribly obvious. And that's only one set of values anyway which you have to weigh against the purposes, values, priorities, and so on which come from all over the place."

(Tate, 1998)

and

²⁶ The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority was formed out of a merger between SCAA and NCVQ and came into existence in September 1997.

"Decision making in education at school level as well as national level is extremely difficult because you are juggling with an awful lot of information, a lot of information which is missing, a lot of values and assumptions which have not been thought out, together with all sorts of capital realities which are handed down at a particular time, because of resources, because of political pressures and so on."

(ibid.)

The Labour government, elected in the Spring of 1997 has altered aspects of the National Curriculum, though perhaps not radically.²⁷ There has developed an acceptance that the National Curriculum needs to evolve over time, that the original was over prescriptive, but that its essential qualities should be retained. The National Curriculum is under review and this is an opportunity to develop ideas of maturity as well as an holistic approach to learning that encompasses all aspects of curriculum both within and between conventional subjects. It also provides an opportunity for subjects such as economics and business to be considered once more.

Given Dr. Nick Tate's importance as Chief Executive of QCA in the debate concerning the next stage of the National Curriculum, it is worth quoting him at length:

"The National Curriculum tends to ossify, which I don't think is an argument against having a national curriculum - I think the argument in favour of a national curriculum is very strong indeed - I think it's an argument against having too tightly a prescribed national curriculum. We had a ridiculously over prescribed National Curriculum in '89, '90, '91 and Dearing slimmed it down very substantially and I would slim it down further and I think that's the direction in which its going in Primary schools and in Key Stage 4 and that will give you the feeling of flexibility."

"....what I've been trying to do over the last few years in preparation for a future review of the National Curriculum is to encourage people to look at the whole picture and to look at the needs of the child, look

²⁷ In January, 1998 the curriculum was suspended in primary schools in order to concentrate on the 'basics' of literacy and numeracy, and at Key Stage 4 to allow for more flexibility, but in an interview in the TES headed "10 years on Ken's still very pleased with himself" Mr Baker is quoted as saying Mr Blunkett's (the Labour Secretary of State) speeches sound "like my old scripts" (Passmore, 23.1.98:7).

at the needs of society and the needs of the economy and actually to go back to first principles."

"....the National Curriculum was above all designed to ensure that each new phase starting on the back of the previous phase and building on the progress that children had made as a result of their learning but also as a result of their maturation." (Tate, 1998)

Given the thrust of the argument presented in this dissertation, such comments are encouraging. On the other hand, the centralisation which has been a feature of all government policy since 1945 continues, regardless of Party. Curriculum initiatives tend increasingly to be prompted from the centre. Indeed,

"....over the last 15 years, reform of the English education and training system could be characterised as moving from a 'nationally reactive/locally dynamic phase' to a more 'nationally proactive/locally reactive phase', while at the same time retaining its voluntaristic and market-led nature." (Hodgson and Spours, 1997: 6)

Such strategic vision from the centre as expressed by Tate may be no bad thing, but it does require vigilance. Centralised control always carries the risk that political imperatives may ultimately outweigh educational ones.

3.10 Economics, Business Studies and the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum was to have a profound effect in schools, not least in the area of economics and business. Economics had always been seen as a subject of value and intellectual rigour, but had never been anything other than a minority subject at O-level. It suffered still more with the introduction of GCSE (Whitehead, 1996: 198). In contrast, business studies had made rapid inroads throughout the decade leading up to the National Curriculum (Radnor, 1994: 20), partly as a result of TVEI and partly through innovative curriculum development projects such as BIS. It gained further momentum following the introduction of GCSE (see chapter four).

However, despite their value and popularity, both economics and business studies were excluded from the list of subjects in the National Curriculum, which also, incidentally but perhaps connectedly, represented a "....curious retreat from the drive towards vocationalizing the curriculum which had been evident since 1976" (Chitty,

1996: 29). Since the National Curriculum was designed to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and also to prepare young people for the world of employment (DES, 1987b: para. 4), this exclusion "...was inconsistent with the government's hitherto strong support in particular for economic awareness" (Whitehead, 1996: 198). It also says something about the attitudes and values underlying the National Curriculum's introduction.

It is particularly ironic that it was a Conservative government, predicated on a general belief in the power of the market and specifically that educationalists were inclined not to prepare students for it (Kelly 1990: 40), which was the very one to exclude the majority of school children from possessing even a basic introduction to the economic and business concepts which are so crucial to their lives.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the 1988 National Curriculum largely represented the values and ethos of a small but powerful group of individuals. It was hastily conceived and implemented, with minimal consultation and reference to the more considered views of academics and other members of the education community. Its emphasis on particular subjects attempted, simplistically, to avoid the need to articulate detailed aims, but the result was a highly prescriptive, over-crowded curriculum, which nevertheless still contained gaps. It insisted on knowledge through content as a way of transmitting the particular, historical view of society held by those who framed it, but this ignored important changes in British society such as those to do with the role of women, multi-culturalism and multi-ethnicity. As such its values lacked 'congruence' with those prevailing in the wider population and so it required almost immediate modification, through the introduction of cross curricular themes and non-statutory guidance.

Because the issue of aims and values were not properly addressed, the maturity of the learner was only considered in the 1988 National Curriculum as a means of testing children at certain stages. Thus two curriculum models, one based on content and the other on assessment sat uneasily alongside one another, with neither being clear about what each was ultimately trying to achieve in terms of the education of young people in schools. Once again 'congruence' was lacking and this resulted, certainly in terms of the assessment model, in its almost total abandonment.

So the 1988 National Curriculum 'failed' largely because it was under theorised, which in turn resulted in an inability to achieve what I call 'congruence' certainly in two, but perhaps even all three of the interlocking circles described on page fifteen. Not only were values and the development of young people ill considered or ignored, but so too was content. Ten years or so later this lack of considered reflection has been recognised, and as a result QCA is canvassing opinion widely so as to describe clear educational aims set in a values context appropriate for the next century. The degree to which they can succeed in this task, and the extent to which the maturity of the learners will be taken into account, remain unclear however.

For those within the economics and business community, as well as in many other areas which had developed during the previous decade or so, the 1988 National Curriculum dealt a crushing blow; but business studies in particular, failed to die. The market place, much beloved of the National Curriculum framers responded, and the demand from pupils for subjects as stimulating and relevant as BIS has ensured the subject's survival and growth, under a new, more liberated regime. It is therefore appropriate to turn to that initiative in the next chapter to see how that success was achieved.

3.12 References

- Aldrich, R. (1988) "The National Curriculum: An historical Perspective", in Lawton, D., and Chitty, C. (Eds.) *Bedford Way Papers/33. The National Curriculum*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Aldrich, R. (1991) "Introduction", in Aldrich, R. (Ed.) *History in the National Curriculum*, Bedford Way Paper. London: Kogan Page and Institute of Education, University of London.
- Aldrich, R. (1996) *Education for the Nation*, London: Cassell.
- Aldrich, R. (Ed.) (1991) *History in the National Curriculum*, Bedford Way Paper. London: Kogan Page and Institute of Education, University of London.
- Aldrich, R. and White, J. (1998) *The National Curriculum beyond 2000: the QCA and the Aims of Education*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Baker, K. (1993) *Turbulent Years: My Life in Politics*, London: Faber and Faber.

- Balen, M. (1994) *Kenneth Clarke*, London: Fourth Estate.
- Barber, M. (1996) *The Learning Game. Arguments for an Educational Revolution*, London: Victor Gollancz.
- Black, P. (1993) "The Shifting Scenery of the National Curriculum" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Blenkin, G. M., Edwards, G., and Kelly, A. V. (1992) *Change and the Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Bolton, E. (1993) "Perspectives on the National Curriculum" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Chitty, C. (1989) *Towards a New Educational System: The Victory of the New Right?* Lewes: The Falmer Press.
- Chitty, C. (1992) "What Future for Subjects?" in Ribbins, P (Ed.) *Delivering the National Curriculum*, Harlow: Longman
- Chitty, C. (Ed.) (1993) *The National Curriculum - is it Working?* Harlow: Longman.
- Chitty, C. (1996) *Generating a National Curriculum. Block 4: Organising and Control of Schooling*, Milton Keynes: The Open University.
- Daugherty, R. (1995) *National Curriculum Assessment*, London: Falmer Press.
- Dearing, R. (1993) *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: Interim Report*, SCAA.
- Dearing, R. (1994) *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: Final Report*, SCAA.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1977) *Curriculum 11 - 16. Working papers by HM Inspectorate: a contribution to current debate*, London: HMSO.

- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1978) *National Survey of Secondary Education*, London: HMSO.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1987a) *Kenneth Baker calls for curriculum for pupils of all abilities*, Press Release 22/87 23 January.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1987b) *The National Curriculum 5-16: a consultation document*, London: DES, July.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1988) *National Curriculum Task Group on Assessment and Testing: a report*, London: DES.
- (DFE) Department for Education (1992) *The Implementation of the Curricular Requirements of ERA - An Overview by HM Inspectorate on the Second Year, 1990-91*, London: HMSO.
- Editorial (1997) "Europe's Farm Follies" in *The Economist*, 6.9. Vol. 344 No 8033.
- Fowler, W. S. (1990) *Implementing the National Curriculum*, London: Kogan Page.
- Gilbert, R. (1984) *The Impotent Image: Reflections on ideology in the Secondary Curriculum*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Gipps, C. (1993) "The Structure for Assessment and Recording" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Goodson, I. F. (1988) *The Making of Curriculum*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Gordon, P (Ed.) (1996) *A Guide to Educational Research*. London: Woburn Press.
- Graham, D., with Tytler, D. (1993) *A Lesson for us all*, London: Routledge.
- Hargreaves, D. (1991) "Coherence and manageability: reflections on the National Curriculum and cross-curricular provision" in *Curriculum Journal*, Vol. 2, No 1, pp. 32-41.
- Haydon, G. (1997) *Teaching about Values*, London: Cassell.

- Hirst, P. (1993) "The Foundations of the National Curriculum: Why Subjects" in O'Hear, P., & White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) (1997) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.
- Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (1997) "From the 1991 White Paper to the Dearing Report: A Conceptual and Historical Framework for the 1990s" in Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.
- Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) (1996) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Horton, T. (Ed.) (1990) *Assessment Debates*, Milton Keynes: Open University.
- Kelly, A V (1990) *The National Curriculum: A Critical Review*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing
- Lawson, N. (1992) *View from No. 11: Memoirs of a Tory Radical*, London: Bantam.
- Lawton, D (1973) *Social Change. Educational theory and Curriculum Planning*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Lawton, D (1993) "National Curriculum: Professional or Ideological" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Lawton, D. (1994) *The Tory Mind on Education 1979-94*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Lawton, D. (1996a) *Beyond the National Curriculum: Teacher Professionalism and Empowerment*, London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Lawton, D. (1996b) "The Changing context: the National Curriculum" in Hodkinson, S., & Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.

- Lawton, D., and Chitty, C. (Eds.) (1988) *Bedford Way Papers/33. The National Curriculum*, Institute of Education, University of London.
- MacGilchrist, B. (1993) "A Primary Perspective on the National Curriculum" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- McSmith, A. (1994) *Kenneth Clarke: A Political Biography*, London: Verso.
- Moon, B (1990) *New Curriculum - National Curriculum*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Murphy, P. (1990) "TGAT: A Conflict of Purpose" in Horton, T. (Ed.) *Assessment Debates*, Milton Keynes: Open University.
- (NCC) National Curriculum Council (1990a) *Curriculum Guidance 4: Education for Economic and Industrial Understanding*, York: NCC.
- (NCC) National Curriculum Council (1990b) *Curriculum Guidance 3: The Whole Curriculum*, York: NCC.
- (NCC) National Curriculum Council (1990c) *History Non Statutory Guidance*, York: NCC.
- Norwich, B (1993) "The National Curriculum and Special Educational Needs" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) (1993) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Passmore, B. (1998) "10 years on Ken's still very pleased with himself" in *Times Educational Supplement* 23rd. January.
- Pring, R. (1989) *The New Curriculum*, London: Cassell Education.
- Pring, R. (1992) *Changes in Curriculum and Assessment*, Unpublished paper.
- Radnor, H. (1994) *Across the Curriculum*, London: Cassell.

- Ribbins, P (Ed.) (1992) *Delivering the National Curriculum*, Harlow: Longman.
- Rowe, G., and Whitty, G. (1993) "Five Themes Remain in Shadows" in *TES*, 9 April.
- (SCDC) School Curriculum Development Committee (1987) *The National Curriculum 5-16. Response from SCDC*, London: SCDC.
- Slater, J. (1991) "History in the National Curriculum: The Final Report of the History Working Group" in Aldrich, R. (Ed.) *History in the National Curriculum*, Bedford Way Paper. London: Kogan Page and IoE.
- Tate, N. (1998) Interview, 20th February. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Thatcher, M. (1993) *The Downing Street Years*, London: Harper Collins.
- Watts, R. (1992) "History" in Ribbins, P. (Ed.) *Delivering the National Curriculum: Subjects for Secondary Schooling*, Harlow: Longman.
- White, J. (1973) *Towards a Compulsory Curriculum*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- White, J. (1988a) "An Unconstitutional National Curriculum" in Lawton, D., & Chitty, C. (Eds.) *Bedford Way Papers/33. The National Curriculum*, Institute of Education, University of London.
- White, J., (1988b) "Two National Curricula - Baker's and Stalin's. Towards a Liberal Alternative" in Moon, B (1990) *New Curriculum - National Curriculum* London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- White, J. (1993) "What Place for Values in the National Curriculum?" in O'Hear, P., & White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- White, J. (1998) "New Aims for a New National Curriculum" in Aldrich, R., and White, J. *The National Curriculum beyond 2000: the QCA and the Aims of Education*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.

- Whitehead D. (1996) "Economics and Business Education" in Gordon, P (Ed.) *A Guide to Educational Research*, London: Woburn Press.
- Whitty, G., Rowe, G., and Aggleton, P. (1994) "Subjects and Themes in the Secondary School Curriculum" in *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 159-81.
- Wolf, A. (1995) *Competence-based Assessment*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Young, H. (1989) *One of Us. A Biography of Margaret Thatcher*, London: Macmillan.
- Young, M. F. D. (1998) *The Curriculum of the Future*, London: Falmer Press.

CHAPTER 4

A KEY STAGE 4 INITIATIVE: THE BUSINESS & INFORMATION STUDIES PROJECT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes an innovative and arguably highly successful curriculum initiative in business studies, which began in a single Local Education Authority, but that went on to have an international impact. Business and Information Studies (BIS) was created in the mid-1980s, before the introduction of both the GCSE and the National Curriculum and yet it was, in some sense, a precursor to both. It possessed a number of innovative features in terms of content, pedagogy, student learning, assessment and teacher support. It was aimed at pupils across the 14-16 ability range and was designed to be equally attractive to both sexes. It drew together certain strands of business and economics education that had, by the 1980s, developed along quite separate and distinct lines.

BIS was developed in isolation, within a single local authority. It was the creation of a small team, led by the county's economics and business studies advisor, who perceived shortcomings in the teaching and learning of his subject area. The practices and values that it introduced, therefore, impacted upon only a relatively small number of students in the early stages, and even when it became nationally recognised it was seen only as an option at Key Stage 4, a marginalisation that was compounded under the ten-subject National Curriculum. Furthermore, many of the learning styles introduced for students in the 14-16 age group sat in stark isolation to the modes of study that they would encounter at A-level, and so any sense of continuity in learning was in danger of being lost. The response of BIS to this challenge, the creation of a 16-19 course, encountered initial resistance from a number of quarters and has attracted a relatively small following. The reasons for this lack of success are two-fold, it is argued. First, whilst the A-level version fits the practical requirements of those students who are familiar with the methodology, they are themselves a minority. Second, by failing to recognise maturity it continues to project the values of its 14-16 counterpart, and these are less appropriate for the 16-19 cohort.

4.2 The Context

Before examining BIS in detail it is necessary to describe, in brief, the context in which it found itself, for "business education" was, and remains something of a hybrid. Certainly, by the early 1980s, business and economics education had developed a number of strands. At the extreme, however, there were but two: characterised as the 'academic' and the 'vocational'.¹

Economics was, at least in the 16-19 curriculum, mainstream and uncompromisingly academic. Business studies, on the other hand, lacked a similarly clear focus. 'Business Education' ranged from the overtly vocational - such as typing and shorthand - to relatively abstract and mathematical Advanced level course, such as that offered by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES).

4.2.1 Economics

Within schools, economics was a subject that blossomed after the Second World War. Initially it was taught predominantly at Advanced level, from where it gained its academic credentials. This, it has been argued, is important if a subject wishes to make ground within the curriculum (Gilbert, 1984; Goodson, 1985, 1987). In 1954, 2,500 students offered economics at that level, a number that grew rapidly to more than 6,000 by 1961 and nearly 47,000 by 1989. From this peak it went into serious and rapid decline so that by 1998 only 18,670 sat the examination (see figure 4.2 and appendix three for detailed figures).

The subject was also followed at Ordinary level and CSE, and for a time was highly popular. In 1981, 43,000 students offered the O-level and more than 100,000 at CSE (1976), when it was the eighth most popular subject. O-level economics tended to have the strongest hold in independent schools and was predominantly studied by boys (Parsons 1996: 42), but, as Davies (1996) argues and table 4.1 shows, it never met the conditions necessary for high status subjects: large departments, high resource allocation, more able pupils, promotion and incentive posts, headships and curriculum discrimination (Goodson 1987).

¹ The terms 'academic' and 'vocational' have long been a source of dissatisfaction amongst educationalists because of what might be termed the 'baggage' that comes with them. *In extremis*, 'academic' was clearly superior, implying a Socratic methodology that resulted in cultural appreciation and well roundedness, whilst 'vocational' implied craft training of an inferior mind. In *Qualifying for Success. A consultative Paper on the Future of Post-16 Qualifications* (DFEE, 1997) the terms "general (academic), general vocational or vocational" are used in an attempt to remove any sense of predestiny. In this work I shall continue to use 'academic' and 'vocational', because those terms are the ones commonly understood. This does not impute a hierarchy.

4.2.2 Business studies

Business studies had a quite different pedigree, and unlike economics was split between the academic and the vocational. The academic strand was represented by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) A-level, which had its roots stretching back to the mid-1960s. These roots were set firmly, although not exclusively, in the independent sector (Lines, 1987; appendix one). UCLES' main rival in the business studies market was the Associated Examining Board's (AEB's) A-level, which took a quite different and arguably more reflective slant, but which was perceived as 'easier', both to learn and to teach.²

UCLES also offered an O-level syllabus but it never achieved wide popularity. There were three reasons for this lack of success. First, like economics, because it was developed from the UCLES A-level it tended to be taught by those specialists in institutions offering the advanced course and this necessarily limited its range. Second, the UCLES A-level was, by the time of its introduction, suffering from increasing competition from the AEB's syllabus. As a result there was less 'brand loyalty'; a teacher who had chosen to abandon the UCLES syllabus at A-level would be unlikely to select the O-level course, especially since there were close similarities in design and structure between the two.³ Third, in 11-16 comprehensive schools the O-level faced competition from less 'academic' courses and those that were overtly vocational. Thus, for students who were predominantly of middle to lower ability Commerce was a popular choice with boys, whilst the girls followed Office Practice, Shorthand and Typing (Kelsey & Lambert, 1988; Parsons 1996: 47; Chambers, 1991: 102; Davies 1996: 33).

The business studies picture was further complicated by the existence of the Business Education Council's (BEC - latterly the Business and Technology Education Council [BTEC]) Business Studies courses, which were almost exclusively taught in Further Education (FE) establishments. BEC business studies was designed for post-16

² The UCLES course contained a strong mathematical content (and the 'linear' syllabus still does). Interviewed in 1987, Professor John Dancy, who was Master of Marlborough College, the school that first introduced business studies into the curriculum, saw mathematics as "the keystone of academic respectability". (Dancy, quoted in Lines, 1987). Unfortunately, as Barnes (1993: 42-43) points out, "....many teachers have an impression of the whole course as 'hard', with its traditional commitment to a wide range of numerate techniques."

³ For instance, 'decision-making' was the underpinning paradigm for both. As Chambers points out: "An O-level followed in 1978, and schools teaching these syllabuses received curriculum support from the Cambridge Business Studies Project. 'The focus of development was within the academic/examinations curriculum. This was a deliberate aim of the Project, as it did not see such courses as in any way vocational, although the integrated nature of the syllabuses did reflect developments in business education in further education (e.g. BEC/BTEC national courses).'" (Chambers, 1991: 102. Parenthesis in original)

students and was overtly pre-vocational, to cater for a clientele that tended to be those who had not done well enough to continue to A-level in school and who planned to go out to work after college. Because of the training aspect of many FE courses, work related facilities were often better, especially in the provision of computers but also in terms of links with employers. These aspects were reflected in the style of BEC courses.

Table 4.1 illustrates the relatively small time spent by students studying either economics or business studies, and also the increase in business studies at the expense of economics:

	Age	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996
Economics	14	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	*
Economics	16	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	*
Economics	18	4.5	4.4	4.8	n.a	n.a.
Bus. St	14	n.a	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0
Bus. St	16	n.a	3.3	4.0	2.5	2.4
Bus. St	18	n.a	4.7	6.2	n.a	n.a.

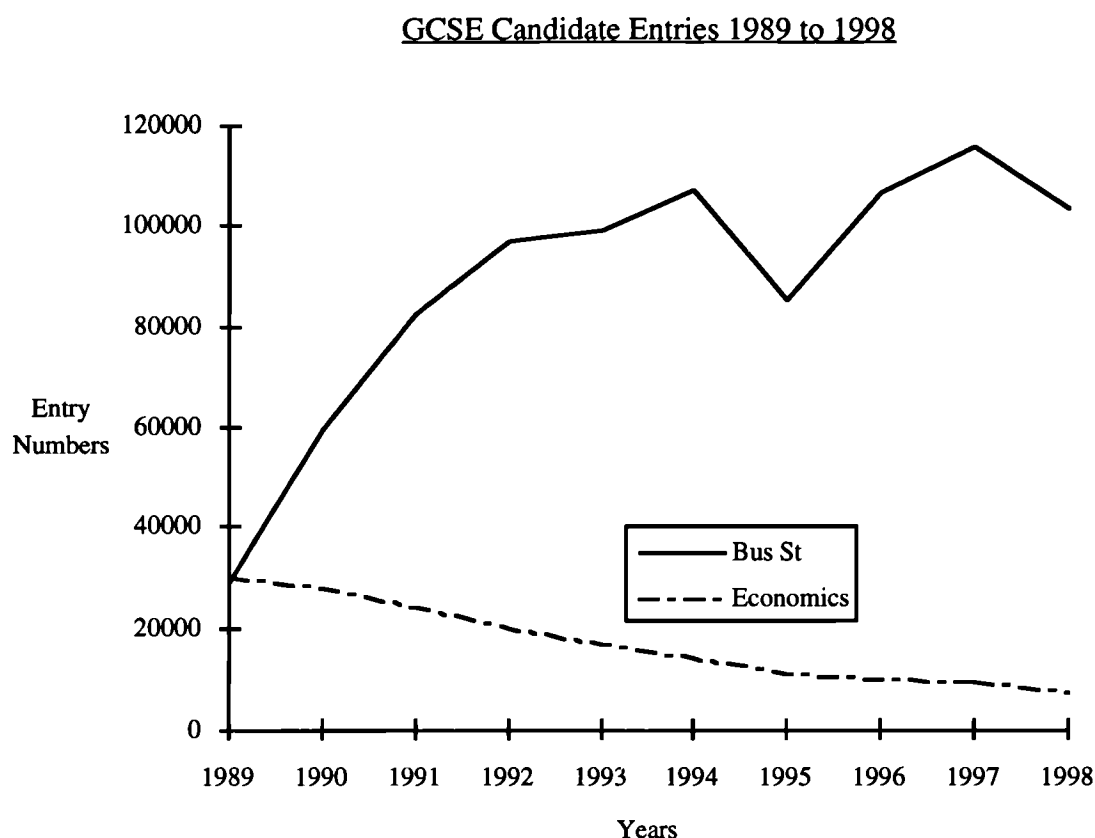
* Not included in the survey

Sources: DES, 1986, 1990; DfEE, 1994, 1997

Table 4.1 Percentage of Secondary Students' Time Spent Studying Economics & Business Studies

4.2.3 Examination entry numbers in economics and business studies

Figure 4.1 shows GCSE candidate numbers from 1989 to 1998. It is interesting to observe the rapid growth of GCSE business studies, despite its exclusion from the ten-subject National Curriculum. There appear to be indications that it is now stabilising at around 100,000 candidate entries per year. Economics, on the other hand, shows a seemingly inexorable decline.



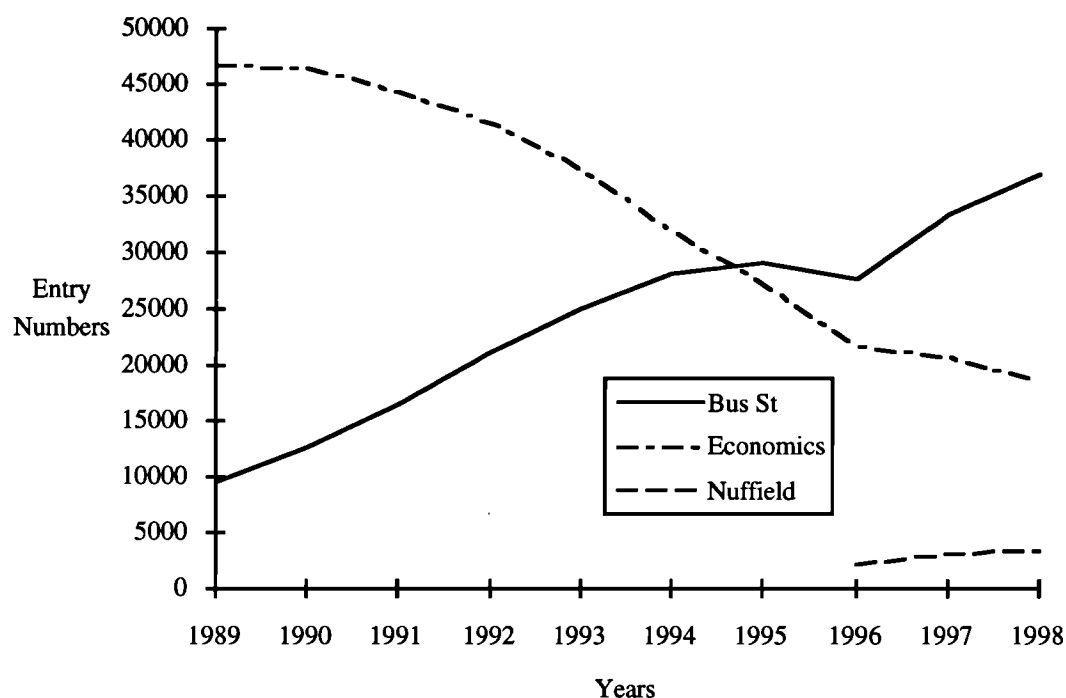
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997*	1998*
Bus St	28957	59177	82918	97282	99236	106942	81879	106456	115498	103262
Econ	29883	28168	24231	19787	16701	13985	11206	9985	9600	7430
Total	58840	87345	107149	117069	115937	119927	93085	116441	125098	110692

* The 11% reduction in entries in Business Studies between 1997 and 1998 must be set against an overall entry figure that dropped from 5,415,176 in 1997 to 5,353,095 in 1998. The percentage offering business studies out of the total candidature, therefore, fell from 2.1 to 1.9.
Sources: DES, DFE, DFEE

Fig 4.1 GCSE Candidate entries 1989 - 1998

Figure 4.2 (below) supplies the data for A-level entries over the same time period. This shows an apparent substitution of business studies for economics. In 1989, for instance, the total candidature for the two subjects was 56,176. In 1998 it was 55,678, suggesting a slight decline. It should be noted, however, that the Nuffield Economics and Business Project (first examined in 1996) is counted separately, and so the total is increased by 3,274 to 58,952 in 1998.

GCE A-level candidate entries 1989 - 1998



	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Bus St	9513	12607	16595	21304	25169	28197	29137	27716	33458	37008
Econ	46663	46495	44466	41573	37465	31938	27311	21842	20765	18670
Nuff								2074	3063	3274
	56176	59102	61061	62877	62634	60135	56448	51632	57286	58952

Sources: DES, DFE, DFEE

Fig 4.2 GCE Candidate entries 1989 - 1998

4.2.4 Teaching and Learning

The divisions that existed within the subject areas were reflected in pedagogic styles and traditions. Teachers tended to specialise, with very little cross-over between the academic and the vocational. "Somewhat belatedly" (Whitehead, 1996: 198) specific training of teachers of economics started in 1972, when a course for post graduate economists commenced at the Institute of Education, University of London and this was followed in 1975, at the same institution, by one for teachers of business studies.⁴ This is important because, as Dawson demonstrated (1977: 85-103), teachers trained

⁴ The business studies course was part-funded by the Cambridge Business Studies Trust.

to teach economics are more effective than those who are not. Yet the numbers trained to do so were, for many years, comparatively small compared to the demand.

As table 4.2 shows, economics teachers usually possessed a degree in that subject, whilst the background of business studies teachers was far more varied.

	1988		1992		1996	
(%)	Economics teachers	Bus. St teachers	Economics teachers	Bus. St teachers	Economics teachers	Bus. St teachers
Female	28	74	34	68	n.a.	59
Part-time	8	25	13	24	n.a.	18
Aged >50	15	36	15	22	n.a.	16
Degree in subject	47	3	49	4	n.a.	16

Sources: DES, 1990; DFE, 1993; DFEE, 1997

Table 4.2 The Different Profiles of Economics & Business Studies teachers in English and Welsh Schools

The table reveals a number of other trends. Over time the emphasis on older, part-time, female teachers of business studies has become less clear as more specifically qualified, younger staff have entered the profession to teach the subject. It is also significant that the Department for Education no longer collects the data for economics teachers, reflecting its declining importance within the curriculum.

The areas known as 'skills': office practice, shorthand and typing were taught by those with similar backgrounds, usually possessing Pitman, City and Guilds or RSA qualifications as well as commercial experience.⁵ Very often these teachers would also offer Commerce as well, since the nature of Commerce courses, whilst based around the written word, placed a strong emphasis on practical aspects of business. In FE colleges meanwhile, teachers were more likely to have had industrial and

⁵ The lack of cross-over between teachers of 'academic' and 'vocational' subjects continues to this day, although the introduction of GNVQs has resulted in many teachers from the 'academic' wing acquiring TDLB (Training and Development Lead Bodies) qualifications. As the FEFC Inspectorate puts it: "Despite efforts to improve the opportunities for teachers to update their industrial experience, the experience of many teachers is out of date. Some staff teaching GNVQ, who come from a predominantly academic background, have no relevant experience in a vocational area. There are examples of innovative teacher placement schemes such as those offered through local Education Business Partnerships, which enable teachers to have a period in a relevant industrial environment. However, these opportunities are too few, too brief, and are taken up by only a small number of teachers." (FEFC, 1997: 13)

commercial experience and their students were given greater responsibility for their own learning than they tended to be in schools (Kelsey, 1998).

The 'academic' strand of business studies was somewhat different. Until relatively recently the supply of graduates with business related degrees was relatively small, and the numbers coming into teaching, smaller still. This is now changing. Of the 1997 PGCE Economics and Business course at the Institute of Education, University of London, 42% possessed economics degrees, 41% business or business related degrees and the remainder either a professional qualification or degrees in related areas such as Law or Accounting. As far as INSET is concerned, the Cambridge Business Studies Trust (see appendix one), until 1997 based at the Institute of Education, ran and continues to run week long residential courses for teachers re-training in business studies. Their backgrounds are varied, from economists dissatisfied with the way their subject is developing, through PE teachers reaching middle age, to classicists recognising the reality of a dwindling demand for their specialisation.

4.2.5 The Technical and Vocational Training Initiative (TVEI)

Within the context of economics and business education, especially BIS, but also in a wider sense, TVEI is an interesting example of the way curriculum development can advance when adequately funded and supported at local as well as national level. Set up by Lord Young and the Department of Employment (it was announced by Margaret Thatcher in November 1982), TVEI was explicit in its aim of bringing school and industry closer together and was therefore seen by some as 'right wing'. In consequence it was initially greeted with suspicion and even hostility by certain teachers (Pring, 1992: 5), but it brought much needed resources into education at a time when the Treasury was restricting expenditure. Teachers gladly accepted the resources and then modified the courses in a way that suited pupils across the ability range.

Just as economics and business were ignored in the 1988 National Curriculum, so also was much of the progress made under TVEI. Along with the HMI 'areas of experience', Clyde Chitty maintains that the National Curriculum represented "...a total defeat....for the attempts made by the Manpower Services Commission...to force schools to give greater prominence to those skills thought to be easily and quickly transferable to work environments" (Chitty, 1992: 31).

Richard Pring is more sanguine, arguing that TVEI was markedly effective:

"....the TVEI curriculum liberalised an otherwise narrowly conceived vocationalism and vocationalised a liberal tradition which had too often ignored relevance to the world of work, howsoever that was conceived." (Pring, 1992: 1-2 quoted in Radnor, 1994: 16)

TVEI was important for business studies. Not only did it provide computers, but more importantly, it raised the subject's profile and the esteem of those teaching it. For many business studies 'skills' teachers (office practice, typewriting and so on) this was a lifeline. It represented an opportunity to update their knowledge of information technology, as well as helping them to acquire a more academic approach to the subject. It was a base upon which BIS was to build, as we shall below. It also somewhat adds to the mystery as to why business studies, as we saw in chapter three, was ignored so totally in the National Curriculum.⁶

4.3 The Hampshire Initiative

It is against this background that Mr Ben Kelsey was appointed Business Studies adviser to Hampshire LEA in 1982. Kelsey was experienced within the FE sector. Apart from lecturing, he sat on BTEC's curriculum committee for four years, and was therefore familiar with the prevailing teaching and learning styles. He regarded existing business studies courses as largely irrelevant to the needs of young people and to the world of work - which he later described as "business education in content rather than context" (Kelsey, 1998). It also concerned him that the computer and other office-based equipment in schools was generally of poor quality (Darking, 1986).

There was also a problem with progression. Sixth form and FE colleges in Hampshire had largely adopted BTEC courses and were about to introduce the (ultimately ill-fated) Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE), and yet the preparation for such courses was poor in the 11-16 comprehensive schools that fed them (Kelsey, 1987: 170).

⁶ There was strong rivalry at the time between the Department of Education and the Employment Department, which may be one reason. Another was that, like TVEI, by spreading vocationalism across the ability range it "...incurred the wrath of the New Right who are prepared to tolerate courses of a vocational nature only if they are reserved for pupils who can be labelled 'non-academic' or 'non examinable'" (Chitty, 1989: 174).

Finally, Kelsey was keen to move business studies teachers away from their dependence on 'skills', being aware that the information revolution was about to transform offices around the world and render the shorthand-typist virtually redundant (Capel, 1997).⁷ As Parsons (1996) put it:

"The traditional menu of typewriting, commerce and office practice was attractive to many schools who saw the package as offering a vocational direction for a significant group. The changing nature of employment and the increasing recognition of the rights of all pupils to have a broad and balanced education challenged that position. Change was slow at first but, by the mid-1980s, many schools had begun to adopt a business curriculum which reflected this right and included some of the content of traditional commerce with analytical approaches taken from economics." (Parsons, 1996: 47)

4.4 The Early Years of BIS: From Conception to the National Curriculum

Kelsey's first task when he was appointed Hampshire's adviser for business education was to survey what was on offer. What he discovered

"....was a curriculum which was antediluvian. Office practice, typing, bits of business studies which was just formal content belted out in vast amounts with no relevance." (Kelsey, 1998)

As a result, in 1983 he decided to call a conference that brought together representatives of secondary schools, sixth form and FE colleges, business, head teachers and others concerned with business education. Its aim was to examine how the school curriculum might be modified to suit the needs of pupils of all abilities and of both sexes.

"We worked for two years designing a new curriculum which would be broad, which would contain a whole range of skills of a more

⁷ Interestingly, there is evidence that the demand for shorthand remains. A survey of local employers undertaken by the Business Education department at Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke in 1996 showed that, of the 14 replies (a 50% return), seven were "very much in favour". These included the Brook Street Bureau, Blue Arrow and Merit Recruitment. The AA, whose headquarters is in Basingstoke, said their senior secretaries use shorthand and Wiggins Teape that "shorthand is now viewed as a prestigious ability and is preferred to audio skills." (Green, 1996: 1)

generic kind, particularly of course, I.T. skills, which were then just beginning." (Kelsey, 1998)

Although the course laid a strong emphasis on I.T., other skills found a place, including those that today find an echo in GNVQ and the Dearing Report's recommendations on key skills (Dearing, 1996):

"We got together with industrialists and they built in a series of key skills: working with others, working independently....being able to get up and give presentations, communication skills....We actually certificated them as well, and we built in things like work experience as a component within the curriculum." (Kelsey, 1998)

Furthermore, and unusually since this predated GCSE, the skills were assessed across the entire ability range. This provided a "whole range of opportunities (for children) to prove themselves. So you have got the broadest range of learning experiences married with a broad range of assessment opportunities" (Kelsey, 1998).

Following the 1983 conference, Kelsey invited a number of teachers to join a project team to design an O-level/CSE course in Business and Information Studies. Amongst them was Judith Capel, then Head of Business Studies at the Neville Lovett School in Fareham, Hampshire. Capel was to have a significant influence over the project in the years to come, rising to the post of Deputy Director. For her, the BIS project was a natural extension to the work she was already doing as a Head of Business Studies:

"I already taught across two rooms, I already had a situation where my typists partnered CDT (Craft, Design and Technology) pupils, and ran projects. So the philosophy wasn't new to me, it was something I was quite used to anyway, and so I could relate to it."

(Capel, 1997)

The project team met on five occasions throughout 1983, spending week-ends designing a curriculum document that formed the basis of the BIS course. In January 1984 the document was circulated to all secondary schools in Hampshire and a large number offered to pilot the course. Twenty-six schools were selected, alongside three from outside the county. All were LEA funded.

Between January and June 1984 teachers from the twenty nine schools met eight times at residential conferences to design a complete package for the implementation

of the course. This was itself a huge task because "the teachers had no idea what we were talking about. These were office practice teachers " (Kelsey, 1998). Because of the need for detailed guidance, the BIS materials that were written were heavily prescriptive - a considerable aid in the early years of the project, but one leading to growing frustration as teacher confidence increased.⁸

As well as teacher input, the project also benefited from the wisdom of consultants such as Frank Kelly, the former Chief Inspector for Newcastle, and Keith Evans from Berkshire LEAs, who were drawn in to advise on particular aspects of the development. In addition, HMI, represented by Alan Walmsley,⁹ gave support and guidance throughout the formative period (Kelsey, 1998).

Teachers worked in regional teams. These became the basis for the area support network that operated once the course got underway. The local nature of this network was important, not least because the strong coursework element of the assessment process required moderation, but also because it was a way for the project team to receive feedback on the effectiveness of the assessed assignments, which were centrally set.¹⁰ By 1990 there were regional consultants across all LEAs in England and Wales as well as in Germany and Cyprus.

At the same time as this work was going on, the project team selected a number of computer programs for students to use. "Software Appreciation" conferences were held at five centres for a period of ten weeks, with staff attending for one evening each week.

Teaching the course commenced in the pilot schools in September 1984. A link was formed with the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) which was

⁸ This is a dilemma faced by curriculum developers generally and was certainly a factor considered by the Nuffield team (see chapter five) of which I was a part. In the final analysis, however, a new development will fail unless it is supported by materials in the early years, even if the same material is abandoned later as familiarity and maturity grows. The BIS 'file' was eventually published by Longman, but became 'ossified' (Kelsey, 1998) at that point in time. The project continued to produce supplements, including the previous year's examination, which provided teachers with an increasingly rich source and width of choice.

⁹ Alan Walmsley, HMI, was a supportive figure of business education for over thirty years. I first met him in 1986 when I was researching the development of the Cambridge Business Studies trust. I remember him saying then that one of the first lessons of curriculum development was to ensure that assessment, syllabus, materials and curriculum should be written in parallel and be dovetailed. This was the only way to guarantee consistency and, in his view, make it attractive to teachers. This was a lesson that I took with me into the Nuffield project (chapter 5).

¹⁰ There is an interesting parallel between these 'set assignments' and those designed for Part 1 GNVQ, piloted in 1995. One of the criticisms of post-16 GNVQ was the moderation of assignments, which were set and marked in each college and appeared to lack consistency (Wolf, 1997). In 1995 I was part of a team that researched this issue for the Manpower Services Commission (ICRA, 1995), but by the time the report was written the decision to introduce set assignments had already been made.

funded by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). Five of the pilot schools were participants in Hampshire's TVEI. This was important for two reasons. First because it was a clear demonstration that the vocational and academic divide in schools could be bridged, and second, because it provided an alternative source of funding that could be, and later on was tapped.

Resources were a major issue. The level of computer hardware and software required went well beyond the resources of most schools, which had generally not purchased much equipment since the donation of single, primitive BBC Acorns to schools in the 1970s. Nevertheless, the reality of staff computer awareness and machine availability meant that software had to be developed that was compatible with the BBCs (Kelsey, 1987: 171) but which would have to be configured in purpose-built teaching rooms - a considerable expense. Fortunately, the Department of Trade Education Unit awarded a grant of £150,000 for 1985/6, and some eighty six schools obtained grants of £1,000 each to offset the costs of setting up. In 1986 there was a further grant of £140,000, which enabled a further two hundred and ten schools to introduce BIS.

The success of the course was immediate and extended well beyond the county boundaries. Even in the second year of operation, sixty eight schools from other LEAs were invited to join, in addition to thirty further Hampshire schools. Such rapid expansion required considerable INSET. In July 1985 the project team ran four summer schools for 180 teachers from twenty six different LEAs, and in the following year no fewer than two hundred and forty five teachers attended INSET courses.

Again, this involved considerable cost. Members of the project team were having to travel long and time consuming distances in order to service the regional network. The Manpower Services Commission provided £84,000 as part of TVEI-related in-service training (TRIST), which funded the establishment of regional consultants. These consultants underwent training from the project team in Hampshire, having been recommended by their county advisers. They were practising teachers of BIS within their counties and all had attended Hampshire summer schools. The first regional consultants' course took place in June 1986 at a new Curriculum Development Centre in Southampton, which was opened in April 1986, with Kelsey seconded to manage it.

Another milestone was passed in 1986, when the first cohort of 333 BIS students sat their terminal examinations. Since this was before the introduction of GCSEs, an Ordinary level was available through the Associated Examining Board (AEB) in business studies and a Certificate of Secondary Education in both business and

information studies validated by the Southern Examining Group (SEG). Because it received dual certification it became known as the "Double Option", which required twice the normal contact time. This requirement was bound to have serious implications once the 1988 National Curriculum was put in place. In the meantime, however, the change from O-levels and CSEs to GCSEs appeared to present BIS, and indeed the whole of business studies, with an opportunity that it had never experienced before.

4.5 The General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Prior to the introduction of the GCSE, the division between O-levels and CSEs was clear: the able sat O-levels, the less able CSEs. Almost invariably business studies teachers either offered CSEs or vocational qualifications such as RSA or City and Guild qualifications; their status was plain. However, throughout the 1970s and 1980s the Cambridge Project, first as an overtly 'academic' A-level and then as an O-level had had a beneficial effect on the subject's image. As Davies says:

"Teachers in the commercial tradition were disadvantaged within the English school's system. They taught in the low-status 'vocational' part of the curriculum, they lacked the professional status accorded by degree qualifications and they were women. Given the structure of power within the system they were unlikely....to raise the status of their position by securing a foothold in the 'academic' curriculum. The term 'Business Studies' was introduced into the school curriculum not by these teachers, but by economists who established in the 1970s a new 'academic' course in Business Studies for 16-19 year olds.¹¹

Whilst this course attracted....only a relatively small number of examination entries it created the opportunity for change in the status of the commercial tradition in schools. It created this opportunity by lodging the name 'Business Studies' within the 'academic' roll call."

(Davies, 1996: 34)

¹¹ Davies is presumably referring to the UCLES Business Studies A-level. If so he is not correct in suggesting that it was set up by economists. In fact John Dancy (in Lines, 1987) makes his opposition to economics at Marlborough College clear. The other prime movers, including Richard Barker, Jim Clifford, David Dyer, John Powell and Peter Tinniswood came from a variety of backgrounds.

In addition, TVEI was providing the impetus, through the relatively resource-rich Manpower Services Commission, to promote I.T. in schools. This was invariable linked with business education in some form or other, often for the simple, pragmatic reasons that first, typewriting classrooms could easily and quickly be converted to accommodate computers, and second, because keyboarding skills were required for both the old and the new technologies, and staff existed in business studies with the ability to teach them. Thus, given the raised profile provided by the conjunction of TVEI, BIS and other initiatives,¹² it was unsurprising that the Schools Examinations Council (SEC) accepted business studies as one of the twenty subjects to have National Criteria for GCSE (Chambers, 1987: 71).

For BIS this was a wonderful opportunity, since the course had, from its inception been designed for the whole ability range. BIS offered schools a way into funding through TVEI, and despite being somewhat revolutionary in its style of teaching and learning it appeared to be entirely in step with the Conservative government's thinking on what should be learnt in schools. It also enjoyed the blessing of HMI, it improved classroom discipline, was developmental for staff and enjoyable for students (DES, 1987: 18-19).

Unsurprisingly, therefore, subject entry numbers grew rapidly, but after only one year with the Southern Examining Group, BIS moved to the London and East Anglian Group. As a piece of curriculum history this was an interesting move. CSEs, and to a lesser extent GCEs, tended to have strong regional ties. It was therefore natural for Hampshire's LEA to consider SEG/AEB to be its 'home' examination board, based, as it then was, in Aldershot. The problem, as far as the Authority was concerned, was that SEG/AEB were making all the profit from BIS in the form of subject entry fees, and yet Hampshire, having funded it from the outset, were continuing to pay around £400,000 a year to maintain it (Kelsey, 1998). Kelsey was therefore asked to negotiate a profit sharing arrangement with AEB/SEG, but the Board claimed that the syllabus was theirs and would not countenance any change; it would, after all, set an unfortunate precedent. In the end solicitors letters were exchanged and BIS moved, having agreed terms with ULEAC.¹³

¹² For instance, the Northern Examination Association's Business Studies Syllabus B and Tameside's Mode 3 Business Studies.

¹³ At the time I was a fairly recently appointed chief examiner for the AEB's A-level in Business Studies. I was telephoned and told that BIS was leaving the board and that a substitute syllabus needed to be found immediately. Would I be prepared to join a writing team in an hotel in Oxford over two week-ends? The resultant syllabus combined business studies and IT and eventually became very popular as a core plus option paper, the core being business studies, and IT one of the options. The rumour at the time as to why BIS was leaving AEB/SEG was that Kelsey wanted a 'cut' of the exam entry fees for himself, but of course what he wanted was support for the continued existence of the project, which is precisely what he got. Again there is a parallel with the Nuffield Project, but the

4.6 The Impact of the National Curriculum

Having been excluded from the list of ten subjects in the National Curriculum, it was apparent that business studies¹⁴ was going to face a difficult time, despite the large numbers studying it at Key Stage 4. The *Times Educational Supplement* of 11 December 1987 ran an editorial headed "Little room for enterprise":

"No doubt a few ingenious and determined schools, used to fitting a quart in a pint pot, will manage to accommodate the Government's one and a half pints alongside what they believe is best for their students. Many others, like the schools doing the Hampshire course, will cut back on successful initiatives." (TES, 1987: 2)

In the same paper, page ten carries an article with the headline "Business studies flagship course could founder" written by Sue Surkes. Included in it is a quotation from Margaret Threadgold, Head teacher of Swanhurst School in Birmingham:

"We are going to have to consider dropping the BIS project. If the National Curriculum goes through and 30% remains, it would not be conducive to a balanced curriculum to continue with the BIS double option.

If I am being totally constrained by the national curriculum, the only thing that will persuade me to keep BIS is if an adequate single subject is designed and if we can be sure we can include a significant element of business and information studies in years one to three."

(Threadgold, quoted in Surkes, TES, 1987: 10)

However, in the same article a "DES source" is quoted:

"A DES source reacted with horror to the idea that schools might drop the BIS project: 'We would be very disappointed if heads took this rather narrow view of the national curriculum.' There would be time for business education if schools wished to offer it, the source said. Furthermore, lots of elements of business education would be 'there for the having' in the foundation subjects, especially technology." (*Ibid.*)

Foundation was not interested in a similar financial arrangement with London Examinations when the co-directors, of whom I was one, proposed it.

¹⁴ Along with other 'forgotten' subjects such as Latin and economics

To which the TES' leader's response was:

"Critics have been fobbed off by the glib assumptions - repeated in the DES response to the Hampshire worries - that many of the elements that have been brought together in the new interdisciplinary courses can be taught through the core and foundation subjects. But that entirely misses the point of what has been happening in schools - and, equally important, in the work that gets older students out of school. Just as serious, it ignores the whole problem of motivation."
(*op. cit.* : 2)

The reaction of the Hampshire Project's leaders was two-fold. One was to develop a single option BIS and the other was to integrate within the Foundation 'subject' Technology.¹⁵ This would provide a continuing presence at Key Stage Four, but would also strengthen BIS's position at Key Stages One to Three.

In order to emphasise this change, the National Business and Information Studies Project re-formed itself as the National Design and Technology Education Foundation (NDTEF). In the end, for a variety of reasons Technology, as a single vast subject was not a success (Martin, 1994: 48-50) and has largely returned to its component parts within the school curriculum. By trying to make it work, and by aligning NDTEF so closely with this failed experiment, the project lost many allies (Kelsey, 1998) and at the same time did nothing to extend business education into Key Stages two and three. By the middle to late 1990s BIS, although still dominant, was not the force that it had been, as figure 4.4 shows. It faced increasing competition from other syllabuses at GCSE level,¹⁶ which had incorporated many of its innovative features but which contained others that made them more attractive.

¹⁵ The original orders for Technology (initially named *Design and Technology*) carried responsibility for the delivery of such diverse elements as Craft, Design, Art, Home Economics, Information Technology and Business Studies. There was little or no attempt at coherence in this selection (Barnett, 1993:88) and the tensions within schools of attempting to create it were soon apparent. Chris Woodhead, who was then Chief Executive of the National Curriculum Council implicitly accepted this when he wrote: "...NCC has asked two questions: Are the Orders manageable and are they likely to deliver the overall aims of the ERA (Education Reform Act) and raise standards of pupil achievement? The advice we offered to the Secretary of State on the case for revising the Technology Order was based, for example, on our conclusion that the language of that Order is difficult for non-specialists to understand and that the programmes of study (particularly in Key Stage 4) lack focus and rigour. The Order, in short, is difficult to manage and unlikely to raise standards." (NCC, 1993: 29. Parenthesis added)

¹⁶ For instance, SEG's core and option GCSE and Edexcel's Nuffield Business and Economics GCSE.

4.7 The Aims and Values of BIS

There can be little doubt that Ben Kelsey's influence over the project was immense, first as Hampshire adviser and then as the Director of NDTEF. His management style was autocratic; evidence indicates that he would brook no criticism but simply required his project colleagues to follow instructions. This had the effect of clouding their vision. Judith Capel, for some time the Project's Deputy Director saw her aims as simply "....to meet the targets set...without having a wider view" (Capel, 1997). Kelsey "....is a person who dictates and others jump" (*Ibid.*). On the other hand Kelsey possessed the ability to inspire:

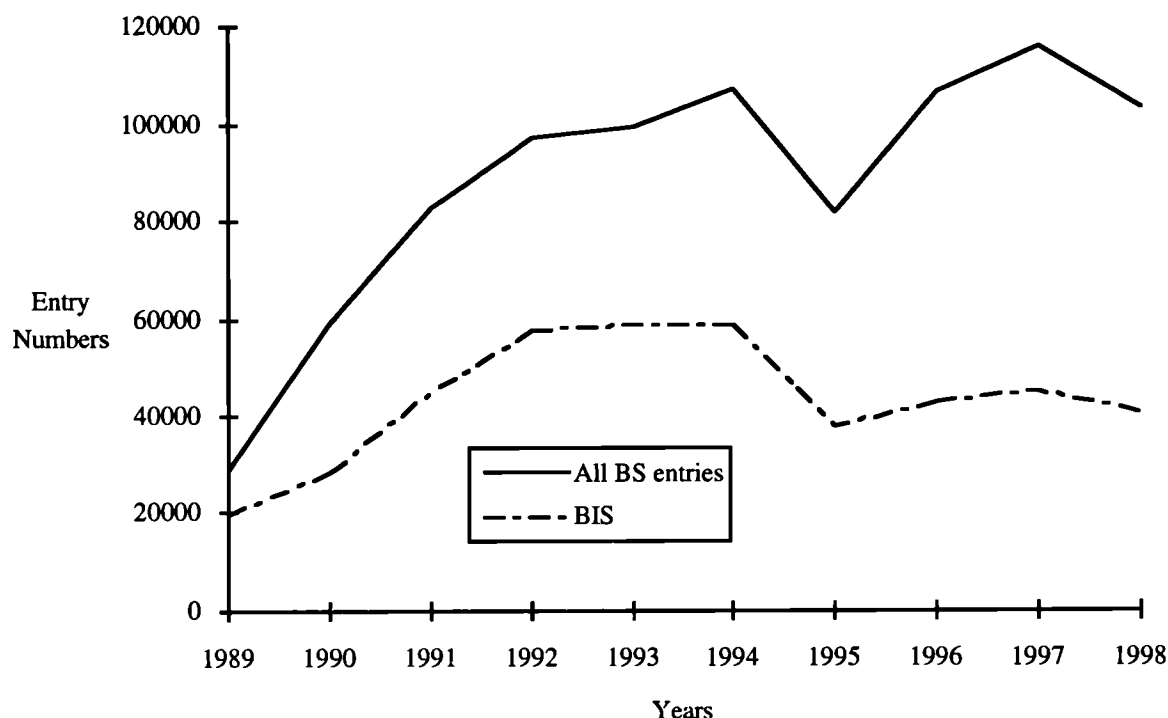
"He (Kelsey) arranged regular meetings down at Lymington and we gave up many week-ends. There was an air of great excitement, we all felt that we were going to be very involved in something new and dynamic, and he seemed to inspire a terrific amount of good will. People were willing to give up their week-ends to write for him, submit ideas, pool their knowledge together and direct it in the way he wanted."

(Jones, 1998)

Kelsey had a mission to transform business studies teachers themselves and indirectly, others beyond. Few would argue that he did not achieve this.

There is little doubt that for less able students the course offered many attractions, not least because it enabled them to produce work that looked good "and....(enabled them) to produce work on the computer which they could alter very easily so that the presentation skills developed" (*Ibid.*). There was even something of an elitist feeling amongst BIS students, who felt that they had something extra that the other students weren't getting. They talked of "having no time to get bored" and teachers remarked at the way "pupils who had been regarded as 'difficult' had shown remarkable changes in attitude, attendance and behaviour" (DES, 1987: 18-19).

GCSE Bus. St. & BIS candidate entries 1989 - 1998



	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
All BS	28957	59177	82918	97282	99236	106942	103262	81879	106456	115498
BIS	19799	28265	45170	57513	58392	58723	37696	42670	44833	40711
BIS as % of all	68	48	54	59	59	55	37	52	42	35

Sources: DES, DFE, EDEXCEL

Fig 4.3 GCSE Business Studies and BIS candidate entries 1989 - 1998

The way that the course was examined added to its appeal and was integral to its development. Originally the assessment regime consisted of 100% teacher marked, board-moderated coursework, but this was modified in line with GCSE requirements. In Kelsey's words, "....we were very interested in formative assessment. As far as we could we tried to minimise summative assessment." (Kelsey, 1998). There was a commitment to as wide a range of testing instruments as possible, hence the assessment not only of key skills but also innovative areas such as oral and group work contributions. By offering alternative means of assessment, BIS allowed young people to achieve success and be valued by their peers where they might not otherwise have been. There was an acceptance through this system that as the child matured so the appropriate assessment task would be set. Equally, there was a determination not to make "....them jump through hoops at intervals which were

unsuitable for them or which, if they were structured in such a way, would simply defeat them" (Kelsey, 1998).

Other assessment innovations provoked wider changes:

"....examination by case study represented a major breakthrough, especially since it became the norm for the content of the case study to be presented in advance. This confirmed that the skills to be examined were essentially those practised in business, where consideration of a variety of alternative strategies was considered good practice. This was hard lesson for examination groups to accept, but it was very much in line with what teachers considered good practice and promoted effective teaching. In this respect, the double option/double certification BIS course was a vital formative influence." (Parsons, 1996: 47)

For the skills teachers, BIS suddenly transformed the place of their departments within schools. "It lifted the image of the secretarial department. Suddenly bottom of the ladder was top of the ladder and everybody wanted to be in that sort of department" (Jones, 1998). For someone like Valerie Jones, who joined the project in its early days, the confidence in her skills and knowledge of curriculum development carried forward to the time when she joined an academic sixth form college and had to fight her corner against entrenched 'academic' subjects such as A-level economics.

There can be little doubt that Kelsey achieved at least one of his aims, therefore: the transformation of many business studies teachers. We can be less sure of the others, however. He wanted to change, in a quite fundamental way, the teaching and learning of business studies, he wanted to extend the education of young people - to broaden their view but also to equip them with useful life skills. However, consciously or not he was transmitting a particular set of values, one that was essentially practical - not just in terms of I.T. delivery, but also in an uncritical acceptance of subject content. This became more apparent when BIS introduced its A-level variant, which we shall examine further below.

As time passed it became increasingly clear that the BIS approach to curriculum delivery imbued students with an eagerness to continue with both its style and content beyond GCSE. Unfortunately, the reality of traditional A-levels was fundamentally different - at the time very few were modular and so they laid great emphasis on final examinations, the style of which tended to be traditional: in business studies short-

answer and essay papers were the norm, and the teaching reflected the content-heavy nature of the syllabuses. For those students who had enthusiastically embraced the teaching and learning style of GCSE BIS this caused problems. The response of the project was to write an Advanced level equivalent.

4.8 The Introduction of A-level BIS

From the outset of the project in 1983, Kelsey had involved all sixth form heads of business studies as well as those operating at Key Stage Four. According to Valerie Jones, this meant that many were as frustrated by 'traditional' A-level syllabuses as the ex-GCSE BIS candidates who were their students. Staff were also concerned that having achieved good grades under a particular teaching and assessment regime at GCSE that such results would not be repeated at Advanced level (Jones, 1998). This was something that worried parents as well as, more obviously, the students themselves (*ibid.*). Kelsey therefore decide to introduce an A-level variant of the GCSE.

Many of the principles that had been identified for the GCSE were also written into the A-level. It was a practical course, enshrining such elements as work experience and shadowing as well as requiring students to write a business plan and set up their own mini enterprise. Like the GCSE, I.T. was integral throughout the A-level.

Once again teaching materials were written, but as before training was required since, although sixth form teachers had been involved with the design and writing of the GCSE, they had not been involved with its delivery and were therefore unfamiliar with the style of teaching that was required. Given that a didactic style predominated at Advanced level, persuading them to make such a change was a difficult problem to overcome. In addition, they were far less familiar with computers in general than those at Key Stage Four, who had generally come up through the 'skills' route, which at least conferred a degree of knowledge and awareness. The challenge of re-training an I.T. illiterate audience composed of 90% men as opposed to the GCSE that was 90% women (Kelsey, 1998) was met, first by attracting sponsorship from IBM who supplied every sixth form that opted to join the scheme with six connected work stations, and second by sending all the teachers to the University of Bristol for ten days training.

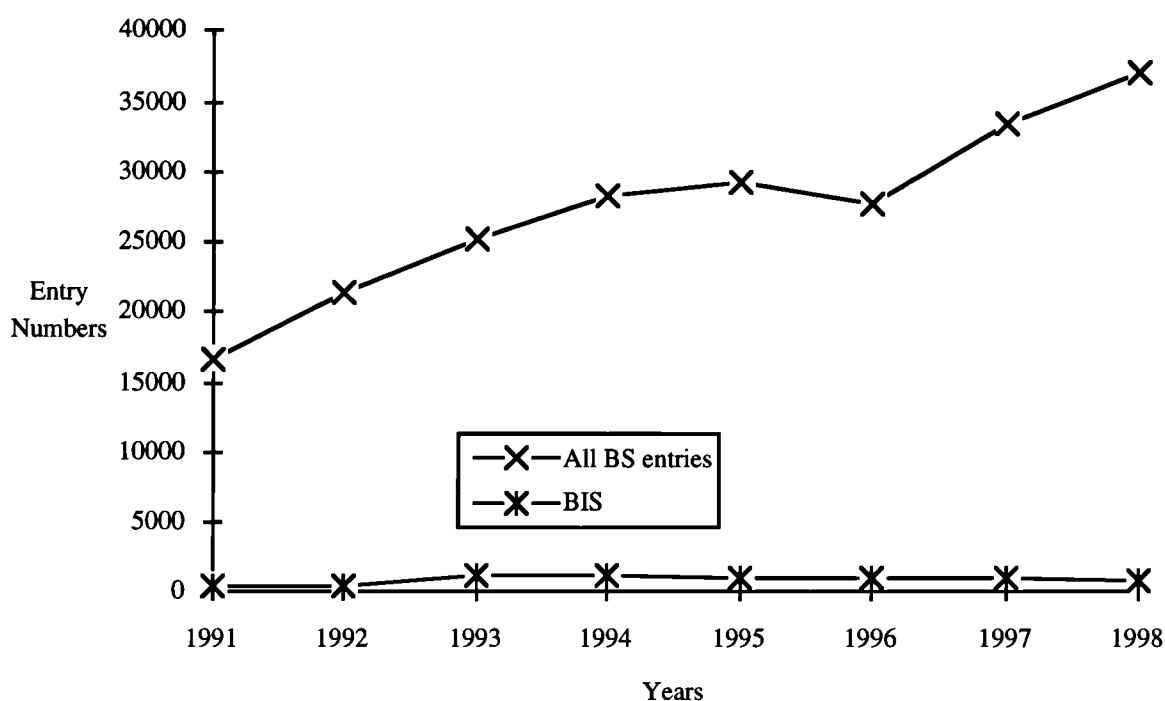
Unlike the GCSE, however, the A-level soon ran into difficulties with SCAA, which, because of a concern over the number and proliferation of syllabuses, was much more

active than its predecessor in vetting courses. Initially 160 schools opted to introduce the A-level, but under the prevailing rules a new A-level had to be piloted with fewer than 1000 candidates. Whether Kelsey was aware of this restriction is not clear, but at the time those of us with close connections with other examinations felt that he was trying to force the syllabus to be accepted by creating such a momentum that it simply could not be stopped. In the event a compromise was reached with SCAA that allowed 100 schools into the pilot programme.

Both Kelsey and Jones believe that the underlying reason for the difficulty with SCAA approval was political, but there were other factors as well. Despite the rhetoric of its advocates, the A-level had serious shortcomings that limited its success. Like the GCSE it emphasised a practical approach and the use and application of I.T. The problem with this is that there is a danger of losing those aspects of critical reflection, that is the values base, that define an advanced course. Whilst this may be acceptable to the GCSE cohort it is far less so at A-level. This aspect will be explored in more detail below when we examine the shortcomings of BIS overall.

Figure 4.5 shows BIS's relative lack of success at A-level, with subject entries never rising much above the 1000 mark in any year, or 2-4% of the total A-level entry. This sits in marked contrast to the 40-50% market penetration at GCSE (figure 4.4). But before turning to the possible reasons for this in more detail, it is worthwhile noting the positive impact that BIS has had across many spheres of education, not least in terms of the professional development of teachers. For many, BIS proved a springboard. Initially, Heads of BIS departments were put in charge of new, larger technology groupings that developed from the introduction of National Curriculum Technology. This was part of what Kelsey calls the 'halo effect' (Kelsey, 1998), which not only reflected those teachers' skills with computer hardware and software, but also their willingness to change and take on new challenges. Later on, people such as Colin Parsons, Peter Green, Judith Capel and Eve Gillmore, who all worked with Kelsey from the early days remained within the world of business education as advisers or consultants, whilst others took the route to Head and Deputy Headship. That said, not all the partings were wholly amicable, and whilst Kelsey maintains that he would not change anything had he his time again, there were shortcomings in BIS, and it is to those that we now turn.

GCE A-level Bus. St. & BIS candidate entries 1991 - 1998



	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
All Bus. St. entries	16595	21304	25169	28197	29137	27716	33458	37008
BIS A-level	366	497	1089	1180	1046	948	991	879
BIS as % of all	2	2	4	4	4	3	3	2

Sources: DES, DFE, DFEE, EDEXCEL

Fig 4.4 GCE A-level Business Studies and BIS candidate entries 1991 - 1998

4.9 The Weaknesses of BIS

Especially at GCSE, BIS proved highly popular with both teachers and students. It attracted a large subject entry and prompted a rash of similarly styled syllabuses, such as SEG's Core plus Options GCSE - a sure market signal of popularity. However, popularity in the market place, an acceptable litmus test of most goods and services, is not necessarily one that can be applied in education because the market is itself distorted, with price being a relatively insignificant variable in decision-making. Thus, teachers 'buying' one syllabus as opposed to another are looking for a number of attributes. One of the most important, especially in times of league tables and published results, is the ability of the chosen course to deliver the kind of examination results that the teacher and senior management are seeking. Another is the

availability and cost of materials and other support, such as INSET. Pupil involvement and interest is a further consideration (Coates, 1998).

BIS tended to polarise views, especially within the business studies community. Its advocates were committed and zealous; yet its detractors were many and often vociferous. Some of their criticisms were soundly based, whilst others were of a more personal nature, often appearing to centre on the style and personality of Kelsey himself.

BIS's reliance on coursework opened up the inevitable criticism of any heavily teacher-assessed course: that reliability was questionable, that teachers would be affected by personalities and that moderation was a trade-off rather than an absolute process. In the early days every teacher who started the course had to attend a two week summer school placement. This allowed control to be exercised by the project directors over content as well as delivery. But, as the course expanded this became impossible, simply because of the numbers involved. Teachers embraced the style, but

"....forgot the business studies content. That was something that just hadn't occurred to us. We had assumed that these would be professionals, who would still be after the outcomes that we normally want from students." (Capel, 1997)

Increasingly, teachers came to BIS from a variety of backgrounds, and not just from business studies. Computing specialists for instance, were attracted to the course by the way it utilised applied I.T., but their knowledge of business studies was often poor. As Jill Martin puts it,

" As a member of a large team of Examiners and Moderators for....Business and Information Studies (2332), it was often reported at co-ordination meetings how easy it was to gauge from the candidates' coursework whether the teacher was from a 'skills'; or 'academic' background. Coursework emanating from the endeavours of teachers with an Economics/Business Studies origin was often sadly lacking in terms of students' I.T. skills and, conversely, coursework produced by pupils taught by the 'skills' fraternity often showed little evidence of rigour or depth in a theoretical context."

(Martin, 1994: 46)

There was often an emphasis on I.T. for I.T.'s sake (Capel, 1997) rather than as a tool for delivering the subject. In poor BIS lessons it was possible to observe students spending excessive time on designing cover sheets for assignments rather than concentrating on the business studies within (the 'distracting' role of I.T. in business education was shown by Cullimore *et al.* [1996], which followed earlier work by Hurd [1990] and Davies [1991]). As Needham *et al* expressed it:

"Information Technology should not be reified or made into a distinct/separate element of a business studies course. This was a very real danger when Business and Information studies was offered as a double option. Information studies lessons were sometimes used simply and repetitively as opportunities to word process assignments carried out in business studies lessons." (Needham *et al.*, 1992: 187)

Even in final examinations there often appeared to be an inequality in terms of skill requirements between a mark earned for "Business Studies" as opposed to one earned for "Information Studies".¹⁷ Indeed, the testing of I.T. *skills* placed BIS at the threshold of the vocational competence debate: on the one hand, those who argue that there is no justification for testing knowledge for its own sake but only for its contribution to competent performance (Jessup, 1991) and on the other those who see competence testing as wholly contextualised and therefore no indicator of the conceptual understanding that enables competence to be demonstrated in different situations (*inter alia* Birnbaum, 1990; Marshall, 1991). We shall examine this debate in more detail in chapter six.

Whilst BIS undoubtedly allowed lower achievers to succeed, it may have failed to stretch the most able. As one experienced teacher of BIS, and now Senior examiner with A-level business studies, says:

"....a little bit like GNVQ, you did wonder at the end of it, well what did they (the students) actually know, and the fact that the (external) exam was relatively lightly weighted didn't help. There was a doubt

¹⁷ For example, in the original double option BIS there was no distinction drawn between business and information studies, and so a pupil who was very good at IT could receive dual certification in both subjects. (Capel, 1997). Similarly, in the A-level module, Assessment of Business Performance, the specimen paper issued by London examinations in 1994, (ULEAC, 1994) one mark is available for making recommendations based on Net Present Value calculations, and one mark is available for incorporating a graph in the report. Whilst it can be argued that a mark is a mark, whether it be awarded for subject knowledge recall or for the higher level skill of evaluation, the mechanistic nature of much of the IT in BIS suggested that higher grades could be achieved with less intellectual ability than in other subjects. Certainly, critical reflection appears much less in evidence than one might normally expect in an A-level Business Studies paper.

about how much underpinning knowledge the candidates actually had at the end of it. Maybe the brighter student would say, 'What am I getting out of this in terms of academic knowledge? In physics we do So and So's law and I can get my teeth into that.'" (SurrIDGE, 1998. Parenthesis added)

The need to develop a single option in order to find space at Key Stage Four following the introduction of the National Curriculum, reinforced these criticisms. The single option was not a success, and as Capel admits,

"It did do some damage to business studies as a strong or good subject or in-depth subject because...it was abused....By the time we realised what was happening it had gained that sort of reputation - that it wasn't up to the rigour of some of the other business courses."
(Capel, 1997)

Similarly, at A-level there was a feeling that the subject content had been sacrificed in order to create a skills-based, flexible course (Dyer, 1991: 89; Barnes, 1993: 43). The assessment objectives reflected this, so that the 'evaluation of findings' was equally weighted with 'make use of I.T. packages and show an awareness of their application'. This may go some way to explaining the relative lack of success of the 16-19 course as opposed to the one for the 14-16 cohort.

The values of both the GCSE and A-level BIS were essentially descriptive:

"....how the world *is* rather than how we would like it to be and how it works, and when they (the students) get out to work how they will fit into this kind of environment....Part of that was exploring through the materials the nature of the world outside." (Kelsey, 1998).

There was a vocational thrust, therefore, which was a consistent theme. It included work experience, work shadowing, business based assignments, the use and application of business standard software, plus more generic preparation such as team working and decision making. Such an approach, however, ignores the changes that occur as students move from GCSE to A-levels. A-levels are altogether more cerebral than practical; indeed it is from this that they derive their considerable esteem. A course that lacks status through a perception, rightly or wrongly, of being 'easier' because it has less 'content' - this is seen most recently in the introduction of GNVQs (chapter six) - is not, at a purely pragmatic level, as attractive to students and parents

as one that has. There is a further point. As we saw above, the 14-16 cohort are not unnaturally attracted to the use of I.T. for what might be termed superficial reasons: the use of clip-art applications, shaded boxes and so on. Undoubtedly this improves the appearance of the work, but not its fundamental quality. At this age, heavily weighted vocational skills may be acceptable, even desirable, but at the ages of 16-19, far less so. An emphasis on I.T. skills carries an opportunity cost, as GNVQs have shown. If a course emphasises those at the expense of others whose worth is greater at A-level i.e. content acquisition, synthesis and evaluation, then its values will not sit with those of the students and will be less attractive to them as a result.

It is perhaps no coincidence that curriculum analysis in business education either ignores or at best treats BIS as peripheral. With the exception of Hurd's 1987 book, *Computers in Economics and Business Education*, none of the later volumes (e.g. *New Developments in Economics and Business Education* [Whitehead & Dyer] published in 1991 and *Teaching Economics and Business* [Hodkinson & Jephcote] published in 1996) includes an article from Kelsey or any of the current project team. There is also a singular lack of contributions to the Journal of the Economics and Business Education Association. This suggests a feeling that BIS had damaged business studies by its intuitive, opportunistic nature; that the subject, which had with much effort been climbing the greasy pole of academic respectability, was somehow being dragged back down again.

Such criticism finds an echo in the debate over GNVQ. As Surridge points out above, there are many similarities between BIS and GNVQ Business, which is hardly surprising given their common BTEC lineage. In both there is an emphasis on formative assessment, the use of I.T., communication skills and assignment work; the teacher is seen as facilitator and students take a large degree of responsibility for their own learning. Interestingly, there are also similar criticisms aimed at students who have completed both, namely that their underpinning knowledge of business is not all that it should be. Both also have a strong vocational emphasis, and perhaps as a result have not given sufficient thought to the issue of values. For those who believe that business studies has a responsibility to emphasise a values base built around a critical reflection of business and its activities within society, rather than to teach children how business works and their potential role within it, neither GNVQ Business in its present form nor BIS passes the test. Unfortunately, partly because of the large numbers of students who study one or the other, the view of those who lack a deeper understanding of the issues, is that these curricula alone represent business studies. This perception is not true, but it creates a real threat to the continued existence of what, for a better word, can be described as 'academic' business studies, a 'subject'

with a respectable place in the school curriculum. This is discussed further in chapter six.

4.10 Conclusion

If we reconsider the interlocking circles described in chapter one, BIS illustrates how 'congruence' was achieved at GCSE but not at A-level. BIS did recognise the maturing young person through the design of its subject content, albeit in an intuitive way, but not the ways values interact with it. The course was successful at GCSE because it chimed with the values of that particular age group. The I.T. content was, for them, new and exciting but also something of a diversion from the tedium of fact accumulation and the hard work that follows a considered reflection on the world of business. At A-level such a situation is not tolerated by gatekeepers such as university departments and SCAA or its equivalent. It is also, I suggest, not good enough for the students themselves, who by the age of eighteen or nineteen are not as blinded by the appeal of computer technology. They are also beginning to recognise that the ethical and environmental issues surrounding business are not only important, but also interesting to study and that this requires a sound information/knowledge base. So in BIS, whilst the interaction of content, values and the developing young person was entirely appropriate at one level, it was not at another: 'congruence' was lost. For the curriculum developer, therefore, BIS is a useful case study. Its genesis was an instinctive reaction to a need rather than a clearly articulated model of curriculum development. This worked, was 'congruent' in a 14-16 context, but partly because the interaction of values and the growing maturity of the learners was not considered sufficiently, it 'failed' at A-level. In the next chapter we will examine another initiative that was also born out of necessity but that did attempt to build a structure taking these issues into account.

4.11 References

- Barnes, S. (1993) "A-level courses in Business Studies" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 1 No 1 Spring.
- Barnett, M. (1993) "A Coherent Policy for Science and Technology - Some Difficulties Explained" in O'Hear P and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

- Birnbaum, I. (1990) "An Assessment of I.T. Capability" in *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, Vol. 6, No. XX.
- Capel, J. (1997) Interview, 4th. September. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Chambers, I. (1987) "Business Studies at GCSE" in *Economics*, Vol. 23. Part 3:71-76.
- Chambers, I (1991) "GCSE Business Studies" in Whitehead, D., and Dyer, D. (Eds.) *New Developments in Economics and Business Education*, London: Kogan Page.
- Chitty, C. (1989) *Towards a New Educational System: The Victory of the New Right?* Lewes: The Falmer Press.
- Chitty, C. (1992) "What Future for Subjects?" in Ribbins, P (Ed.) *Delivering the National Curriculum*, Harlow: Longman
- Coates, G., Hurd, S., and Anderton, A. (1998) *Nuffield Economics and Business A-level: An Evaluation of Curriculum Integration*, Staffordshire University.
- Cullimore, D., Brumfitt, K., and Atkinson, A. (1996) "An evaluation of the Strategies for Integrating Information Technology in the teaching of Business Education within the 14-19 Curriculum" in Walstad W. B. *Secondary Economics and Business Education. New Developments in the United Kingdom, United States and Other Nations*, London: The Economics and Business Education Association.
- Darking, L. (1986) "Double Slice of the Real World" in the *Times Educational Supplement*, 1 August.
- Davies, P. (1991) *Information Technology in economics and business studies classrooms*, London: The Economics Association.
- Davies, P. (1996) "Economics and Business Studies: A Subject in the Curriculum?" in Walstad, W. B. (Ed.) *Secondary Economics and Business Education. New Developments in the United Kingdom, United States and Other Nations*, London: Economics and Business Education Association.
- Dawson, G. G. (1977) "Research in Economic Education at the Precollege Level" in Wentworth, D. R., Hansen, W. L., and Hawke, S. H. (Eds.) *Perspectives on Economic Education*, New York: Joint Council on Economic Education.

Dearing, R. (1996) *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds*, SCAA.

(DES) Department of Education and Science (1987) *Report by H. M. Inspectors on the Hampshire Business and Information Project*, HMSO.

(DFEE) Department for Education and Employment (1997) *Qualifying for Success. A consultative Paper on the Future of Post-16 Qualifications*, DFEE Publications

Dyer, D. (1991) "The Business Studies Curriculum at A Level" in Whitehead, D., and Dyer, D. (Eds.) *New Developments in Economics and Business Education*, London: Kogan Page.

(FEFC) Further Education Funding Council (1997) *Standards and their Assurance in Vocational Qualifications: National Survey Report*, FEFC.

Gilbert, R. (1984) *The Impotent Image: Reflections on ideology in the Secondary Curriculum*, London: The Falmer Press.

Goodson, I. F. (Ed.) (1985) *Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum*, London: The Falmer Press.

Goodson, I. F. (1987) *School Subjects and Curriculum Change*, London: The Falmer Press.

Green, M (1996) *Survey of Demand for Shorthand in Basingstoke Companies*, Unpublished.

Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) (1996) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.

Hurd, S. J. (1987) (Ed.) *Computers in Economics and Business Education*, Heinemann Educational Books.

Hurd, S. J. (1990) "Report on the 1989 National Survey of Computer Use in Economics and Business Studies" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVI, Part 3, No. 111, Autumn 134-140.

- (ICRA) International Centre for Research on Assessment, Institute of Education and the Centre for Curriculum and Assessment Studies, University of Bristol
(1995) *Evaluation of the Use of Set Assignments in GNVQ (SAGE Project)*, Manpower Services Commission.
- Jessup, G. (1991) *Outcomes: NVQs and the Emerging Model of Education and Training*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Jones, V. (1998) Interview, 12th February. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Kelsey, B. (1987) "Business and Information Studies Course" in Hurd, S. J. *Computers in Economics and Business Education*, Heinemann Educational Books.
- Kelsey, B. (1998) Interview, 16/3. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Kelsey, B., and Lambert, P. (1988) "Business metamorphosis" in the *Times Educational Supplement* 26 February.
- Lines, D. R. (1987) *Business Studies: The Search for a Paradigm*, Unpublished M. A. dissertation, London: ULIE.
- Marshall, K. (1991) "NVQs: An Assessment of the 'Outcomes' Approach to Education and Training" in *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Autumn.
- Martin, J. (1994) *Left to Their Own Devices? An Investigation of the Value of Coursework as an Assessed Component in Business Studies Coursework*, Unpublished MA Dissertation ULIE.
- Needham, D., Yeomans, B., Dransfield, R., Howkins, S. (1992) *Teaching Business Studies*, London: McGraw-Hill.
- O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) (1993) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Parsons, C. (1996) "Economics and business in the curriculum: their changing roles" in Hodgkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.

Pring, R. (1992) *Changes in Curriculum and Assessment*, Unpublished paper.

Radnor, H. (1994) *Across the Curriculum*, London: Cassell.

Surkes, S. (1987) "Business studies flagship course could founder" in *Times Educational Supplement*, 11 December p.10.

Surridge, M. (1998) Interview, 5th. April. Tape recording in author's possession.

TES Editorial. (1987) "Little Room for Enterprise" in *Times Educational Supplement*, 11 December p.2.

(ULEAC) University of London Examinations and Assessment Council in association with The National Design and Technology Education Foundation (1994) *Advanced Level Business Studies (Revised Draft Modular Syllabus) 9076. 1996*, ULEAC.

Walstad, W. B. (Ed.) (1996) *Secondary Economics and Business Education. New Developments in the United Kingdom, United States and Other Nations*, London: Economics and Business Education Association.

Whitehead D. (1996) "Economics and Business Education" in Gordon, P (Ed.) *A Guide to Educational Research*, London: Woburn Press.

Whitehead, D., and Dyer, D. (Eds.) (1991) *New Developments in Economics and Business Education*, London: Kogan Page.

Wolf, A. (1997) *GNVQ Assessment and Reliability*, Nuffield Foundation and the Further Education Funding Council.

CHAPTER 5

THE NUFFIELD ECONOMICS & BUSINESS PROJECT

5.1 Introduction

Thus far we have seen how the 1988 National Curriculum, with its particular agenda and values, posed a serious threat to the development of both economics and business studies. However, despite the apparent lack of curriculum time at Key Stage 4, business studies continued to thrive, especially in the form of BIS. Nevertheless, although BIS was relatively successful within the 14-16 curriculum, it failed to achieve similar popularity in the post-16 curriculum. A smooth transition that recognised the development of the learner from GCSE to A-level was not achieved, partly because the value base upon which BIS was founded was not 'congruent' with those of older students.

In this chapter we shall examine another curriculum initiative, the Nuffield Economics and Business Project, which developed in the 1990s. Unlike BIS it was centrally funded by the Nuffield Foundation. It was organised and run by four co-directors, three of whom were full-time. The fourth, myself, was part-time with the project from its inception in 1991 until 1996.

The Nuffield Economics and Business Project is innovative in a number of areas, including content, pedagogy and philosophy. It takes seriously the notion of the development of the young person, and its impact in the post-16 curriculum has led to a modified version for the 14-16 age group. Particular values are implicit throughout, although whether or not they are clearly articulated to the students and teachers following the course is difficult to establish.

Because the course has only been taught for a limited time, it is too early to say for certain how successful it has been. Initial candidate numbers were good, but growth rates from there have been somewhat disappointing. Nevertheless the project has had an effect amongst teachers of economics who, as we saw earlier, felt particularly threatened by declining numbers opting for their subject.

The work of the project team was conducted at a rapid pace as the minutes of meetings show, often with decisions about course structure, examination syllabuses, in-service training, finance, textbook layout and writing being made almost

simultaneously. By 1993, only two years after the Project started, the fundamental elements of the course were in place. By then the structure had been established, the Student Text's manuscript was with the publisher and the examination had been approved by SEAC. Also, centres had provisionally signed up to start the course, which commenced in September 1994. In July 1996 the first cohort of candidates sat the Advanced level examinations in Nuffield Economics and Business, organised and run by London Examinations. I was the Chief Examiner for the syllabus.

5.2 The Background

5.2.1 The Nuffield Project: its inspiration and impetus

The impetus for the Nuffield Economics and Business Project - hereafter called the Nuffield Project - derived from the growing fears of two economics teachers, Jenny Wales and Nancy Wall, that their subject was at risk within the school curriculum. Although examination entry numbers in A-level economics appeared to be relatively healthy¹ throughout the 1980s, there were indications that suggested concerns for the future.

5.2.2 A Literature Review

It is possible to detect a growing literature in *Economics*, the journal of the Economics Association, that articulates an increasing concern about the state of school-based economics. It starts in 1984, when A-level candidate entries were still to reach their peak, in articles by Guratsky and Welford (1984: 67-68) who presented a similar case in the same volume, arguing that syllabuses were both narrow and too theoretical.

Frank Livesey, a professor of economics as well as a highly successful A-level textbook author, saw the root cause lying not so much within the school curriculum as with the economics taught in universities. Since school economics imitated that which emanated from higher education, any problems with the latter would inevitably infect the former (Livesey, 1986: 54-58). This idea is explored more fully in chapter nine of this thesis.

¹ Following a period of rapid growth, the 1980s were years of stagnation as far as economics entries were concerned with numbers only being maintained by more females entering the examination (see appendix three). They peaked in 1989, but by 1998 had more than halved. As we shall see in Chapter 9, by the 1990s the crisis in economics was beginning to show itself at University level and indeed was fast becoming a world-wide phenomenon.

Rosalind Levacic (Levacic, 1987: 100-105), herself an academic economist teaching in Higher Education, took Livesey's argument a stage further. She offered an interesting perspective by suggesting that a crude attempt to take the maturity of the learner into account would not work. By 'simplifying' the economic models used in higher education, they were rendered ineffective in terms of their ability to explain economic trends. But these very models, although apparently 'simplified', were nothing of the sort as far as the average A-level candidate was concerned. They were both abstract and difficult to comprehend, as well as offering little insight into the world that the students themselves inhabited.

In 1986 and 1988 the debate on the future direction of A-level economics was joined by two authors who became co-directors of the project: Nancy Wall² and myself. Wall (Wall, 1986: 105-107) argued that syllabuses were overloaded, with the latest theoretical concept simply piled upon earlier ones, with little or no attempt to remove any to compensate. Thus, it was not enough, as in the 1960s and 1970s to teach and learn about Keynesian theories of demand management - difficult enough in itself - it was also necessary to add monetarism to the list of topics that had to be covered.

In my article, I took a more cognitive/pedagogic approach (Lines, 1988). I briefly described the work of Piaget, Bruner, Gagné and Bloom and related it to the teaching of economics. I argued in favour of a new 'paradigm' for economics, writing that "the micro-economics currently taught needs to be modified" (*ibid.*: 76); that "....International Trade should be reviewed" since "the theoretical base for this area of study is chauvinistic, prescriptive and....tedious" (*ibid.*) and that economists might have to "call on the talents of other teachers in related disciplines such as Business Studies, Geography and History." (*ibid.*: 77). These reflections were important because they not only shaped my thinking about the way the Nuffield Project should proceed, but they continue to exercise an influence in my work today as a teacher-trainer.

5.2.3 The Pedagogical Background.

At the same time as the literature was accumulating, the work of Professors Linda Thomas and Steve Hodgkinson, with other members of the Economic Awareness Teacher Training team (EcATT) at the Institute of Education, London and Manchester

² Nancy Wall was already a successful economics textbook author in her own right. Along with Peter Maunder and Danny Myers they had modified an American text written by Roger LeRoy Miller. Called *Economics Explained* (Maunder, 1987) it set new standards of comprehensive detail.

University's Department of Education, was also significant from a pedagogic perspective. Thomas and Hodkinson based much of their work on the theoretical underpinning supplied by phenomenography, that there is a unique description of a phenomenon (Dahlgren, 1984: 31; Marton, 1989: 1; Thomas, 1991: 79-83). The EcATT team pointed out that economics students often confused basic terms such as "price" with "cost". When asked why a particular good or service was charged at a particular level, pupils often see it as a reflection of its cost of production³ or its (apparently) inherent value and what is more, they may continue to hold this view despite being able to manipulate supply and demand curves in a relatively sophisticated way in the classroom, or argue quite strenuously and logically in essays that price is determined by the interaction of buyers and sellers in a dynamic market environment. Thomas and Hodkinson's work was important because it forged a link between the reality of students' lives and their learning in economics classrooms. It became an aim of the Nuffield Project to do the same.

5.2.4 Further Dimension.

Jenny Wales's approach to the problem of economics as she perceived it, was to write a textbook on development issues (Wales, 1990). Although it did not sell in large numbers, it was important to the evolution of her own and ultimately the team's thinking, as much because of its style as its content.

Thus by 1990 the three people who were to form the original Nuffield team, Jenny Wales, Nancy Wall and myself had all made contributions to the debate concerning the future course of economics in schools. These publications not only established our credentials as writers but they also influenced our views on the direction that the Project should take. This extended beyond such practical matters as subject content, pedagogy, examinations and the role of textbooks; it also included the values and the aspirations that would underpin our work and its final outcome.

³ It is a fact, however, that in the absence of market signals, such as when a new product is introduced, or where a single firm or firms dominate, price *is* often determined by the costs of production plus a margin. This illustrates the phenomenographers' dilemma - a belief that there is a unique description of a phenomenon, does not allow for the context. It is not appropriate here to enter into a detailed debate over the validity or otherwise of the phenomenographers compared to those who support the notion of meta cognition (Ramsden, 1988: 269).

5.3 The Formation of the Team

In 1990 Jenny Wales and Nancy Wall approached the Nuffield Foundation with a proposal to fund a curriculum initiative with the objective of changing economics in schools. The Foundation's Trustees responded encouragingly, but decided that changing economics alone was not enough and that business studies should be included as well. Given their limited experience in that subject, Wales and Wall felt it necessary to engage someone with a more extensive background. Since I was able to offer experience in both business studies and economics they asked me to join the team, but because of my work at the Institute of Education I felt I could only commit myself on a part-time basis. This therefore left a gap, one that Stephen Barnes eventually filled.

Barnes was a business studies text-book writer who had made a contribution to the debate over the future course of the subject, which blended with the views of the rest of the team (Barnes, 1984: 139-157). He was also a teacher with experience of a wide range of educational establishments from independent schools to sixth form colleges, where he had taught both economics and business studies.

The team did possess common aims, aspirations and values and yet it also suffered from certain shortcomings. Wales and Wall were economists, intent on saving that subject. Their knowledge of, and interest in business studies was initially limited, and this tended to cause difficulties when the challenging task of creating a combined subject was undertaken. The part-time nature of my contract suggested a semi-detached attitude, and Barnes was by nature reflective and not a 'do-er', which was the opposite of both Wales and Wall.

This contrasts with the management of BIS, dominated as it was by Ben Kelsey. The Nuffield team had four directors with no official hierarchy. At times this democracy was a great strength, but at others, a nuisance. Decision-making was often tediously slow and, because it sometimes seemed that there was a jostling for position, personal friction arose that might otherwise have been avoided.

5.4 Comparative curriculum research.

Although the official start date of the Nuffield Project was 1 September 1991, the first Management Meeting of the Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project

attended by all four co-directors took place on 14 May.⁴ The early period from then until the end of 1991 was used to research other curriculum development projects in order to establish a methodology. In addition to travelling to Northumberland LEA to explore a distance learning package that was being developed there, two other curriculum development projects in economics and business studies, Ridgeway and Wessex were investigated as well as, from the perspective of another subject area, the Geography 16-19 Project.

5.4.1 The Ridgeway Project

The Ridgeway Project was named after the school in Wiltshire where it had originated. The courses, which covered a range of subjects in addition to economics, were offered by London Examinations from 1989 until 1994.

The A-level economics course contained six compulsory modules, some of which were innovative, certainly as far as economics was concerned. They included a problem solving investigation of a real firm that required students to give an oral presentation of their results. There was also a coursework module that asked candidates to write a lengthy report on macroeconomic issues using both primary and secondary sources and data.

As far as the Nuffield team was concerned, the Ridgeway Project offered lessons in terms of learning styles and assessment. The emphasis on investigation appeared to have a profound effect on student motivation (Wall, 1990: 18) and brought students face-to-face with the real world, demanding that they relate their classroom learning to the issues faced by business. The very fact that a course entitled "economics" required the application of such analysis to a small-scale business environment was itself important. This was the first manifestation of an attempt to bring together both economics and business studies, although not in the form that anyone on the team would necessarily support, since the students would be going into the business environment without the appropriate conceptual tools such as those found in the areas of marketing, finance and people; topics that would be central to any business studies course.

5.4.2 The Wessex Project

⁴ The original title was the Nuffield Business Studies and Economics Project, but almost immediately (May 1991) the subjects were reversed in order to emphasise economics and thus attract more teachers from that area. The word "Studies" was dropped in September 1992.

The Wessex product represented a more wholehearted attempt to bring together economics and business studies and so was of considerable interest to the Project team. It was the direct outcome of TVEI work in Somerset, but it was subsequently taken up by the LEAs in Dorset, Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire (Leonard & Vidler, 1990: 173). Like the Ridgeway scheme, Wessex covered a number of subject areas, with Business/Economics starting in 1989. The syllabuses were run by the Associated Examining Board (AEB) but, like Ridgeway, they were withdrawn early, in this case in 1994.

The Wessex Business/Economics course followed what came to be known as the "Y Front Model" (*ibid.*: 174), providing a common first year and then offering students the opportunity to proceed along either the "Economics Option" or the "Business Option" route.

The first year was called the common core and included a Foundation module as an introduction to the course. This was an interesting attempt to take the maturity of the learner into account and the unit was to have a considerable impact on the early deliberations of the Nuffield team. It did seem logical, especially given the perceived 'gap' between A-levels and GCSEs, to introduce students to the area in a broad-brush way before embarking upon the demanding and sometimes demotivating tasks of learning the difficult concepts required by the language of these particular subjects.

Between 4-5 November 1991 Stephen Barnes made a personal visit to the Wessex Project Office and produced a paper that summarises the scheme's strengths and weaknesses as he saw them. The paper suggested:

- "• To make Wessex effective requires a personal belief in the ideal of students taking responsibility for their own learning. If this does not exist or becomes lost, then the Wessex ethos no longer works.
- There is an opportunity cost on Wessex courses as some traditional content is given up in favour of learning skills for which students have ownership.
- Teachers have to delegate responsibility to students. This necessarily involves a significant loss of control and requires trust in the students.

- Teacher ownership and control of the course may be the most efficient way of teaching. But is it the most effective way of learning?....
- Wessex courses may place a greater emphasis on understanding the assumptions on which theories are based and being able to question these assumptions."

(Barnes, 1991: 2. Emphasis in original.)

In some senses the Wessex Project pioneered the notion of bringing Business and Economics together, but the common element was not heavily weighted in terms of the whole course. In addition, the very nature of the modules as they were constructed maintained a dichotomy between the two subjects. There was no attempt to integrate them in such a way as to encourage an intellectual synergy - one of the prime objectives of the Nuffield team. Also their modular nature, introduced in order to increase flexibility for students and teachers alike, not only increased complexity in terms of assessment, but more seriously carried the danger of a lack of coherence (Wall, 1990: 20). On the other hand, the Wessex pedagogic style was attractive and some of its lessons were adopted.

5.4.3 The Geography 16-19 Project

Dr Ashley Kent joined the team's meeting on 25 September 1991 and gave a verbal account of the way the Geography 16-19 project developed. He provided a number of insights, the most important of which were: first, that his team had spent the whole of year one researching, brainstorming and reflecting on what they wanted to achieve, second that they were concerned with pedagogy as well as curriculum, and third that the Project continued to offer teacher support in the form of newsletters, an annual conference and a project office based at the Institute of Education. Perhaps most significant of all was the emphasis placed on exploring issues (this word is double underline in my notes of the meeting) built around questions. For me, the idea of students interrogating economic and business situations was exciting. It meant that learning the subject content was not enough to achieve a successful outcome; the content would have to be seen in context. In consequence I believed, the students would necessarily have to question underlying values and so learning would become more integrated and hopefully, more long-lasting.

Kent directed the Nuffield team towards an article entitled, "The Curriculum Framework: a Basis for Change" (in Naish *et. al.*, 1987). This offered an exposition of enquiry-based learning (*ibid.*: 44-46) which is then focused by "questions, issues or

problems" (*ibid.*: 46). This approach appealed to the team and in the final structure of the Nuffield course many of these principles are recognisable.

5.5 Philosophical imperatives.

On the 5 and 6 October 1991 at a week-end conference held at Langrish House near Petersfield, Hampshire, Stephen Barnes set out his opinions on values. His paper, *Why does the Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project Need a Debate about Fundamental Issues?* (Barnes, 1991a) talked about value judgements:

"3 Economics and Business Studies courses are prone to presenting their agendas as though they were self-evidently definitive of their respective subjects. In fact the relative emphasis given to elements within each subject represents a major value statement. e.g. Europe, Development and world poverty; Distribution equality, Environment, Ethics."

and, further on,

"5 Both Economics and Business Studies refer to critical questions of human priority and conduct: they have an intrinsic ethical dimension. In learning the tools of impartial analysis, students should be actively stimulated to explore ethical and political problems, to develop their own positions and to enter dispute and debate with others. This is in itself a vital part of their education and a key source of motivation in the pursuit of their studies.

6 There is a wider philosophical issue at stake. The social sciences have historically adopted the traditional knowledge paradigm of natural science. The result has been an acceptance of a broadly mechanistic structure for knowledge. This is now challenged by the shifts in paradigms at the frontiers of science; by the breakdown of modernism and the rise of organic paradigms; by the critique of deep ecology; by chaos theory. Is it time that students were introduced to non-mechanistic paradigms of subject knowledge? And learned to criticise the mechanistic paradigm instead of accepting it as given?" (Barnes, 1991a: 1-2)

In another paper, *A is for Alienation, Art and A level* (Barnes, 1991b), Barnes drew our attention to the way so many A-level Art students appeared to have an entirely different perspective on their studies. It was as if the subject matter is a part *of* them. They did not regard art as work and so if they saw something that interested them they noted it, perhaps even sketched it and retained the result for future reference; certainly they *thought* about it and reflected on its importance. This, Barnes argued, sat in stark contrast to most other subjects, but in particular to business studies. The reasons for this were complex, one being the structure of educational institutions that encouraged students to see the classroom as a competition, with a prize for pleasing the teacher, or with even greater sophistication, judging the level of teacher tolerance to the amount of work they submit: "Rather like peasants paying rents to a distant but powerful landlord, they measure their academic remittance in terms of 'sides' completed" (*ibid.*: 2).

Although he did not use the precise words, Barnes argued that rather than being taught methods or skills of thinking (see chapter eight), students were instead given masses of information that they were unable to process and question effectively for its underlying value assumptions. He was also concerned with maturity:

"In many schools A-level is quietly regarded as the crown that rests on the academically more humble work taking place in years one to five. Such a perception should be queried. Sixth formers can be as cynical, instrumental and perfunctory as any other age group. Their alienation from much of what they 'learn' is dignified by 'adult' behaviour and weighty text books. Yet behind this façade flourishes a vigorous detachment from academic life and a disarming ignorance of its true nature." (*ibid.*: 5-6)

In the intervening years Barnes has further developed the notions of values, the sixth former and their maturation. He argues that the sixth form student lives in a world that is much more distracting than it was. Assumptions that were made perhaps only a generation ago about the linearity of education, of a move from sixth form to university and onward; progress in terms of career; the role and function of the family, the notion of intrinsic rather than extrinsic meaning and so on, no longer hold. As Barnes expresses it, "sixth form, university and life were about digging for the truth" (Barnes, 1997). Now, he says, relativism holds sway; the world is a text that can be interpreted as you will. Truth is an elusive commodity, if it exists at all. A teacher may say "that's the best book for A-level", but the response may be "best for whom?" The notion that sixteen year olds will be seeking visions or structures that enable them

to classify the world around them is breaking down. Culture has become "Anecdotal, fragmented - it's to do with surfaces, and signifiers; it's very symbolic; hierarchies have broken down, concepts of priority have broken down and students are encouraged in that by television" (*ibid.*) and, one might add, other technologies such as the Internet. This is reflected in the "brokenness" that is seen in textbooks, which no longer contain a clear narrative. There may have been a time, not so long ago when "an authority" would be recognised and would not be contradicted. Now, access to information (accepting that information is not the same as knowledge), devalues the individual as holder of expertise because that potential now lies within the domain of each and every one of us with access to the technology. Students have a variety of dimensions in their lives, from 'the clubber' at week-ends to shelf stacker at Sainsbury's. Somewhere and sometime else they are also sixth formers.

If one accepts Barnes' view, and despite its somewhat polarised and extreme nature it does carry considerable appeal, then its value dimension changes the nature of curriculum development and makes it harder to achieve 'congruence' because of increasing rates of change brought about by new technologies (though the same technologies that offer the challenge also present opportunities). In 1991 Barnes argued that it was necessary to aim for his notion of Art Education across the curriculum. This was hard not to support, but it was also something that hard-bitten and embattled teacher sometimes saw as pie-in-the-sky. This was certainly the reaction that Barnes received from a portion of his audiences, and indeed some of his fellow directors.

Nevertheless, as directors we all felt it was necessary to attempt to bring Barnes' vision into existence even if ultimately, it failed. Thus the Portfolio - the name itself borrowed from Art - was created. The idea of a continuous piece of work throughout a business studies course was not original - it existed in BIS and SEG's Core plus Option GCSE - but it was unusual at Advanced level, and one that we envisaged as being quite different. Our dream was of something that provided evidence of a complete intellectual involvement with the subject. The Portfolio could be constructed from anything and everything that suggested a critique of the worlds of economics and business: from the mundane newspaper article, or a newly designed sweet wrapper to a detailed analysis of a factory visit or a talk given by a local bank manager. In the end, as we shall see below, this vision ran foul of SCAA's rules that limited its size. As a result our vision, a 'full-blown' Portfolio, is not common practice in schools and colleges following Nuffield and this must have an impact upon the values that we were attempting to impart.

One has to accept, however, that there is a learning curve for practitioners adopting any curriculum innovation. Although the Portfolio is one of the main reasons why centres are attracted to Nuffield (Coates: 25), early subject reports and research (*ibid.*: 36) show problems for centres in adapting to the new style. This is changing, however. According to the Senior Coursework Moderator, "In summing up, the portfolio seems to have provided both teaching staff and candidates a special opportunity to show the depth and breadth of their understanding of economics and business. One of the most interesting features has been to see the way in which the portfolio pieces show a significant improvement from stage 1 through to the options." (London Examinations, 1996: 27. Also see Ellis, 1998: 2). In this sense, at least, the growing maturity of the learner is recognised and rewarded.

My paper presented at the Langrish House in October 1991 concerned the issues of paradigms. I argued that the underlying core concept of economics is opportunity cost and that of business studies, adding value⁵. The subjects were therefore clearly linked because individuals as well as firms attempt to add value by allocating resources as efficiently as possible, in other words at the minimum opportunity cost. I conceived the world as it appeared to the ancients - a flat earth surrounded by a dome. The ground where people strive for success is the domain of business studies; the rarefied air above, that of economics. This was significant in terms of values. As we shall see in chapter nine, the conventional positivism of economics leads to a somewhat semi-detached view of the world; the economist offers policy alternatives but not prescriptions. On the other hand, in business there is a pragmatic, managerial or profit orientated tendency, although as chapter eight shows, this view can, and should be challenged. There are times when the economist and the businessperson come close or even touch, such as when the former examines resource allocation within firms and when the latter looks at the impact of government taxation policies on saving and spending. In addition there are, or should be, areas of interest common to both economists and those who study the activities of business, such as ethics, the environment, development, internationalisation and so on. Indeed I believe there is a synergy between the two subjects using these issues as a focus and a unique way of exploring values. In the end they were embedded through the Nuffield course in what are called, "longitudinal themes" (Barnes, 1997).

⁵ I had established the notion of adding value in 1987 in my MA dissertation (Lines, 1987). I was therefore delighted when John Kay, then Professor of Industrial Policy at the London Business School published an article entitled "Economics in Business" which appeared in *Economics & Business Education: Vol. 1: 1; 2*, Summer 1993. In the conclusion he writes: "It (the theory) stresses rent seeking - or the creation of added value - as the purpose of business activity and it explains how added value is derived from distinctive capabilities. It is on these lines, I believe, that we can create a microeconomic theory that businessmen will actually use." (78. My parenthesis)

5.6 The Course Structure and Maturation

As indicated above, the period of debating underlying principles was punctured by the necessity to make progress in the practical areas of textbook writing, syllabus construction and INSET. It was, at times, both stressful and tortuous. Appendix two provides a flavour of the team's activities over the first three years of the project. The most important outcome of this lengthy debate was the course structure shown in figure 5.1 overleaf.

The course structure retains a unitary or 'linear' feel in its final form. The Core is common and module choices are only offered after a minimum of one year's study. Depending on the modules chosen, the students opt for an A-level either in economics, or business studies or combined economics and business studies. In practice this means that the vast, and increasing majority do the combined course, as was our intention. This is shown in the following figure for candidate entries in the examinations taken so far:

	1996 numbers (%)	1997 numbers (%)	1998 numbers (%)
Combined Ec. & Bus	1290 (62)	1919 (63)	2390 (73)
Single economics	449 (22)	702 (23)	565 (17)
Single Business Studies	335 (16)	442 (14)	319 (10)
Total	2074	3063	3274

Source: EDEXCEL

Table 5.1 Nuffield A-level Candidate entry numbers 1996 - 1998

Apart from the more pragmatic reasons for adopting a linear approach to the course structure, I was also interested in epistemological aspects, and in particular about ways of learning economics and business, as my 1988 article demonstrated (Lines, 1988). I had been particularly struck by Bruner's spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1960, 1966). I found further resonance in the work of Lee and Entwistle, who wrote:

AL Economics and Business (Nuffield): The Course Structure

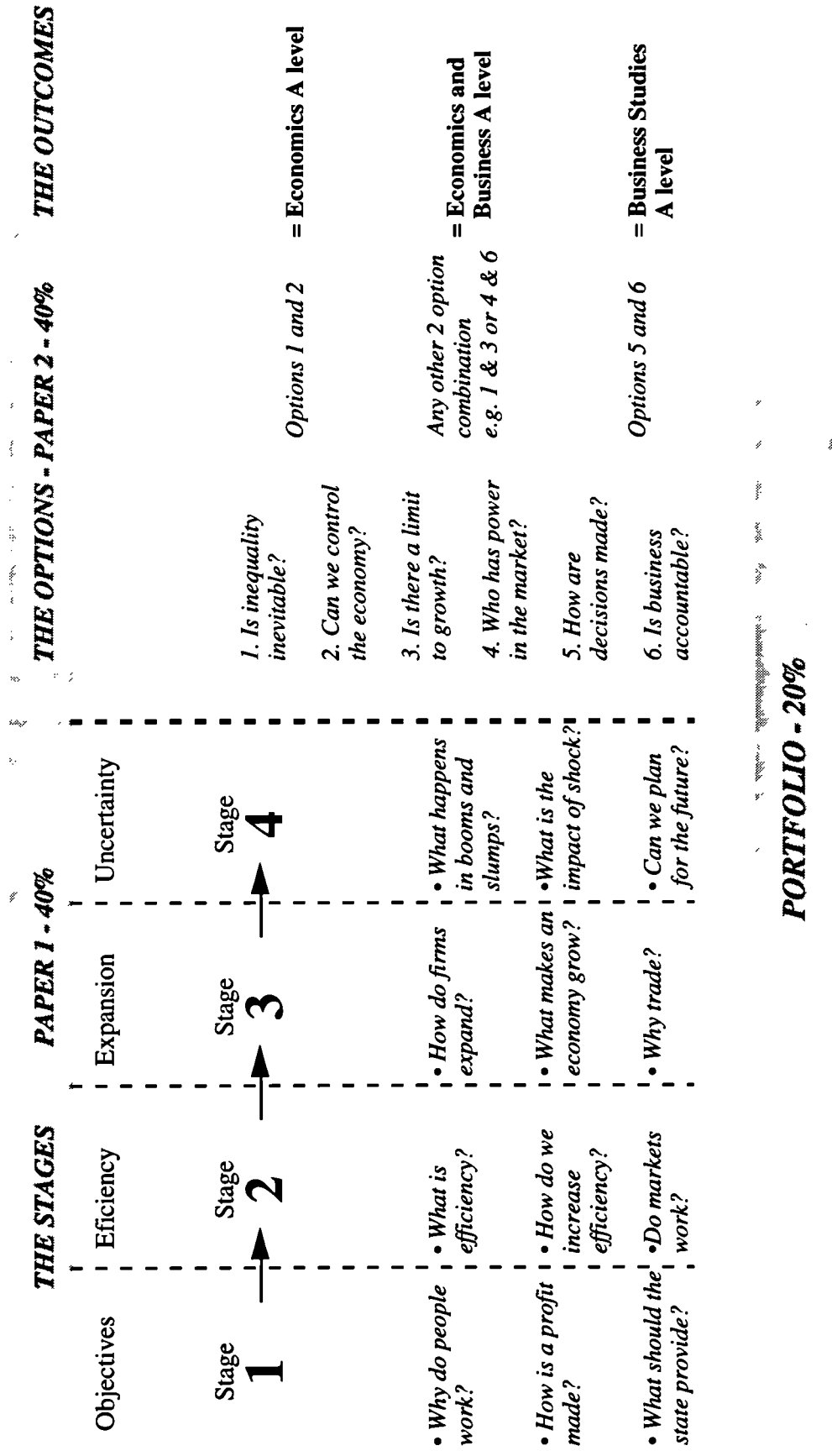


Fig. 5.1 The Nuffield Economics and Business Course Structure

"The only respectable objection to the application of Bruner's thesis to economics would follow from a demonstration that the phenomena of economics do not form part of the experiences of young people."

(Lee and Entwistle, 1975: 34)

To me it was, and is self-evident that economics does form a part of young people's experiences (*inter alia* Robbins, 1954; Devons, 1961; Lipsey, 1963; Kwong, 1997⁶). Opportunity cost, a central, perhaps *the* central idea in economics affects everyone, quite apart from other concepts such as supply and demand, elasticity, the division of labour and so on. These are phenomena which are intuitively understood, but which are rarely expressed in a technical way, other than by trained economists. As Lee and Entwistle put it:

"The mistake is easily made of assuming that the basic components for economics are a set of sophisticated theories....This, however, in Bruner terminology, represents a fairly high stage in the spiral. On examination these theories appear to be compounded of concepts which can initially be comprehended in much simpler economic settings than those with which these more sophisticated theories are associated." (*op. cit.*: 34)

From this it followed that the theoretical underpinning of the course should start at a low level to allow for maturation. We were aware, for instance, of the GCSE/A-level 'gap' - the change in teaching and learning styles which occurred at the end of Key Stage 4, and so very early on in our deliberations the idea of an 'Introductory Zone' appeared. In the final document it was dropped, although the Unit "*Why do People Work*" was written with a GCSE/A-level transition very much in mind.⁷

The Nuffield structure builds in maturation throughout the two years, using the metaphor of "window opening" to explain the process. The notion of slowly, progressively opening conceptual windows is based upon Bruner's spiral curriculum.

⁶ In relation to environmental education Dr. Jo Kwong writes, "I believe children need to integrate both science and economics to understand public policy. Issues teaching without trade-offs and alternatives gives rise to fantasy problem solving. I'm not advocating the teaching of micro- and macro-economics to children, but rather the basic concept of choices in actions. When we choose one action, others are precluded. When we devote money to pursue one project, others are not funded." (118)

⁷ Coates (1998) reports one teacher as saying "Although Nuffield was designed to allow a steady progression from GCSE towards A-level this has not been successful. The first unit is a rag-bag of ideas and is not sufficiently challenging for students. I do believe that there should be a clear step up at the start of a course so that students realise what A-level study is all about." (Coates, 1998: 35)

Concepts are met several times throughout the course, with the window become increasingly widened as the concept is encountered time and again; at each point becoming more complicated. Such an idea sits in contrast to economics teaching in particular, which often proceeds in a series of concept 'blocks', regardless of the maturity of the students involved, or indeed anything they have learned earlier. This traditional approach is illustrated in figure 5.2:

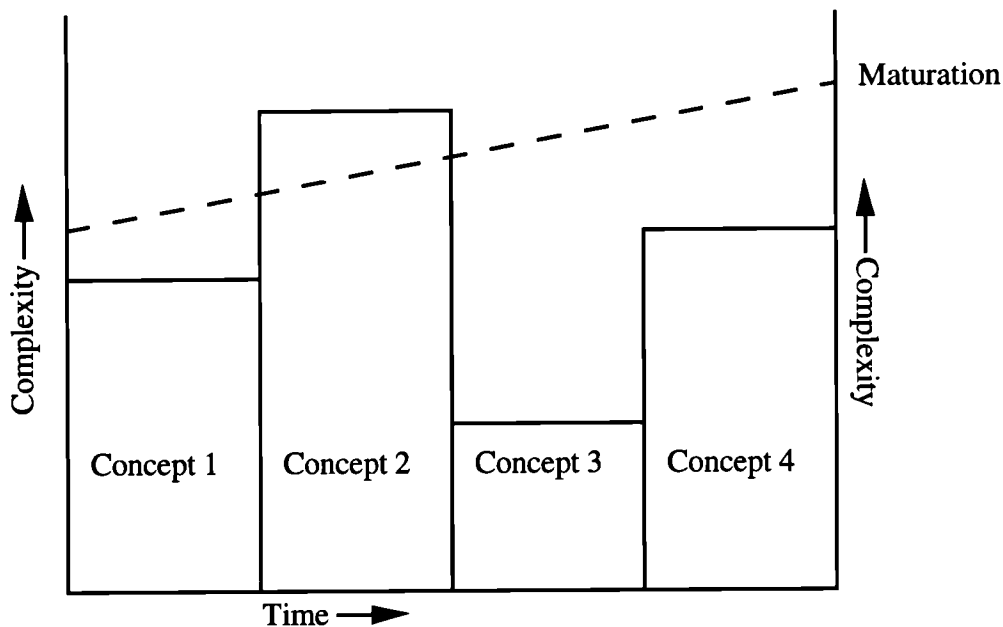
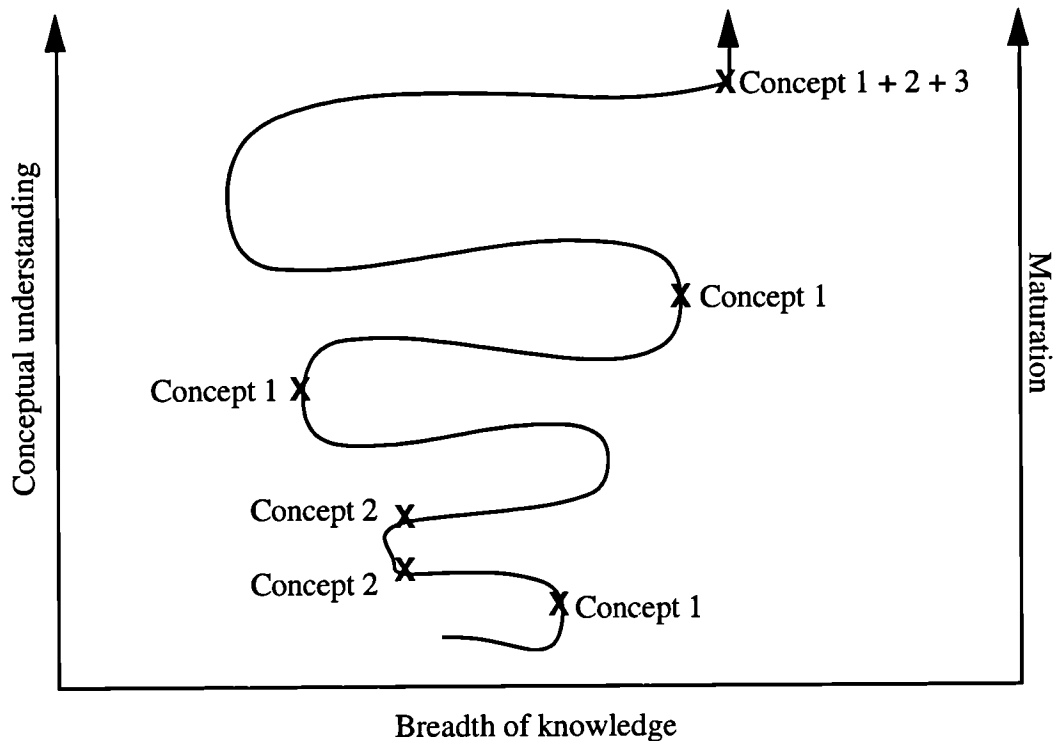


Fig. 5.2 The use of concept blocks in the teaching of economics

Such pedagogy reinforces the notion of the teacher as 'guardian of knowledge', which he or she dispenses in small increments. Not only does this encourage a dependency culture (and perhaps bolster an insecure teacher) but also, by preventing the students from seeing 'the big picture', also stops them from using the subject effectively, by which one means, amongst other things, an ability to question underlying values, until the course is virtually at an end. In contrast we wanted the Nuffield course to develop incrementally, as figure 5.3 illustrates.

By using 'window opening' Nuffield is quite radical in terms of its approach to learning. This can cause problems. Some teachers report that "students never really feel they've done the topic....and this leads to fragmented understanding" (Barnes, 1997). But, like the Portfolio, this situation is improving. Coates quotes one teacher who says:

"It was rather like a jigsaw, integration was difficult and the idea of covering topics, moving on and then revisiting was difficult at first but has proved to be a fresh approach." (quoted in Coates, 1998: 43)



Note: The diagram is necessarily stylised. This is a two-dimensional view of a three-dimensional spiral. The loops should, one would hope, show a continuously upward trend.

Fig. 5.3 The Nuffield 'spiral curriculum'

With the idea of window opening the team had developed a second element of what became known as the "pedagogical paradigm" (*ibid.*: 4) designed to give the course unity. We called it *Progression*, to add to *Investigation* - indicating that students were to take responsibility for their learning, particularly via the Portfolio. These two were eventually joined by the third, *Integration*, which referred to the seamless joining of the two subjects of economics and business. Together they were crucial, as one can see on reflection, although I doubt if any of us recognised it at the time; the development of ideas was evolutionary, not revolutionary - the result of many hours of debate, discussion and at times, hard wrangling. Despite their importance it is interesting to note for instance, that the publicity material sent to schools dated Autumn 1991 makes no mention of them.

Within the course structure itself there were two developments of some significance to the values that the course was attempting to project. One was the titles for each of the Stages: *Uncertainty*, *Objectives*, *Efficiency* and *Expansion*. The second was the use of questions within the Stages. The application of four words and the principle of using questions might appear to another researcher to be relatively simple moves. As a participant observer I recognise the reality - that each involved an enormous amount of time and intellectual energy. Unless one is personally involved in the process it is hard to imagine how tortuous curriculum development can be. So, as in this case, it took us some time to realise that what we wanted as titles were 'jargon free' in the sense that they did not represent explicit economics or business studies terms and indeed were words that one might reasonably expect all students starting an A-level course to understand. This is obvious now, but far from being so at the time. Appendix two provides more details of the processes involved.

The final version of the course structure appeared in the Course Structure document of November 1992. It may seem significant, therefore, that the year which Ashley Kent said it took the Geography 16-19 Project to organise their course structure was almost exactly matched in the case of Nuffield. However, whilst the debate over the structure carried on, the team were simultaneously working on other matters, one of the most important being textbooks, and it is to that challenge we now turn.

5.7 Textbooks and Resources: conflicting values

By 1995 Longman had published eleven resources for the Nuffield Project. They consisted of a Student's Book (Wall, 1994a), Activity Copymasters (Wall, 1995a), Teachers Resources (Wall, 1995b), an Answer Book (Wall, 1995c), a Data Book (Barnes, 1995) and six option books entitled: *Poverty and Wealth* (Wales, 1994), *Government Objectives* (Wall, 1995d), *Resources and Expansion* (Dransfield *et. al.* 1995), *Competition and Control* (Wall, 1994b), *Business Strategies* (Wood, 1995), and *Corporate Responsibility* (Barnes, 1995). They are the tangible outcomes of the philosophy outlined in the structure, but their appearance was far from straightforward. The number of publications suggested difficulties for any commercial publisher, since it was unlikely that they would all be profitable. However, as appendix two details, throughout the early period of the Project there was a fundamental disagreement with Longman over issues of values and ethos, which mainly centred on the Student's Book, but which had implications for the other publications as well.

Longman wanted, and expected to get, a conventional A-level textbook, which within economics and business meant a factual 'tome'. This sat at odds with the philosophical positions of the team, but at the same time there was a recognition that if Nuffield did not produce such a book, someone else certainly would, and this would threaten the entire project since it carried the risk of transferring the underlying philosophy elsewhere.⁸

Some of the exchanges with the publisher illustrate their position. For example:

"As a matter of principle I think one should avoid using terminology that is potentially confusing and off-putting. I feel an over-use of 'Exploring/Exploration' has a lower secondary rather than an A level feel to it." (Willan, 1992: 1)

For the team, such words as *Exploring* were crucial. Equally important, especially given the importance of *Investigation*, was the use of questions. Longman argued that questions imply that the chapter will answer it. They wrote:

"A lot of people are also likely to be put off by an excess of questions simply on the grounds that the main function of a book is to help equip students to answer questions, not to be presented with the questions themselves as the organising principle."

(Longman, 1993: 3)

The use of questions was a fundamental issue, as will be explained in more detail below. That said, it was just one amongst many. There was at times a feeling in the team that any new idea was under constant threat and that the publishers would only be happy when they had an entirely conventional, heavyweight (in both senses) text. On the other hand, the team had to concede that Longman were making a considerable financial commitment in an uncertain market and had agreed to some innovations such as a Data Book and one containing Photocopiable materials.

One of the problems that added to the stress and one which probably weakened the bargaining position of the Project team with Longman, was that whilst the team

⁸ Indeed, as a team we were aware that one of the most successful authors of economics and business texts was working within one of our teacher's groups, and therefore had ample opportunity and access to our materials to write a text if we did not. See Barnes' letter to Wales dated 17 March 1992 (appendix two). This issue was finally put to rest at the Management Meeting of 13 July 1992 where the minutes show it was agreed: "To obviate the risk of another author publishing books on a joint course, the Nuffield books needed to cover every aspect."

agreed on the philosophical underpinning of the course, there was less consensus on the way it should be transferred on to the page. There was a constant and at times heated exchange, centring on whether the context or the content should drive the text. For instance, one context was whether or not a farm in the West Country should 'go organic'. This was an excellent, real-world example in that it not only covered the essential questions of opportunity cost and added value but it also dealt with the 'longitudinal themes' such as ethics and the environment, which run throughout the course and provide the impetus for the values position. Nevertheless, to make each chapter so dependent on one example carried the risk of it becoming out-dated very quickly and some of us were worried about the transferability of that knowledge into another context. I was also concerned because, I knew from experience that teachers, whilst welcoming examples and contexts, especially at the start of a new course, quickly tire of them and want to create their own.⁹

Longman were equally unhappy about the contextualised approach as exemplified by the organic farm. They felt this confused context and theory, since it was intermingled. Where boxes had been introduced, in order to separate theory and context, they believed the separation implied by boxing the text did not in fact happen; that the boxes had to be read sequentially within the chapter. Longman wanted the boxes to disappear except in their use for defining concepts.

In the end a compromise was reached, not only with Longman and the team, but also within the team itself. Concepts were to appear in the text rather than in boxes, whilst case studies would be tinted boxes. The single context approach, such as the organic farm, was dropped in favour of a number of contexts and examples, but it was recognised that a single theme might be appropriate on occasions. Finally there was an explicit acceptance that the Student's book, by being more conventional and less radical than the team wished, would have less importance in changing the teaching of the subjects.

On the other hand, the team remained committed to the notion of questions and argued vigorously for their continued inclusion. We believed that they were not narrow in focus, as Longman said, but instead broadened out into a number of related issues. We were convinced that they would not date since we had deliberately chosen them on the basis of their longevity. The fact that there were no unequivocal answers to the questions we regarded as a virtue and especially symbolic of the way we wanted students to approach the study of economics and business. Finally, the

⁹ As we saw in chapter four, the BIS Handbook was an example of this happening.

argument was forcefully stated on the grounds of direct compatibility with the syllabus. Inevitably, a compromise was reached on this issue as well. Each of the Stages were to have a title: *Objectives*, *Efficiency*, *Expansion* and *Uncertainty*, but beneath each one the questions would remain. At the end of every Stage a case study would be written that pulled together the previous material. The content would sit firmly within the text with examples and contexts in boxes as appropriate.

A great deal of responsibility for the ethos of the course was thus transferred away from the Student's text to the Teacher's Guide, the Photocopiables - named "Activity Copymasters" in order to emphasise their role, and to the Data Book. In addition, the team was determined to ensure that the option books would carry forward the investigative ethos in an innovative and creative way. Thus, when these books appeared, each one was written as a supported self-study guide, on the assumption that students who had been steeped in the investigative ethos for a year would be mature enough to work on their own in the options. This would also open up the possibility of teachers allowing more than one option to run simultaneously within the same classroom. Each "chapter" in the option books was called an "Enquiry" that sets a question for the student to answer. This was followed by a small section that detailed the "Scope" of the enquiry and then "Opening Evidence", which offered the reader material that is sometimes conflicting and may even appear contradictory. The remainder was conventional data that should help students to answer the question set by the enquiry. In practice this approach and the assumptions about student maturity may have been too radical. Some centres have run more than one option simultaneously, but the books are not perceived as sufficiently comprehensive to answer the examination questions that have so far been set. As a result other texts are generally used alongside the Nuffield books in a conventional classroom context (Wall, 1998).

The debates and wrangles surrounding the publishing of the materials affected the team. It is in any event exhausting to write a large number of books in such a relatively short time. In addition, the idea of combining the two subjects was new and so there were no convenient templates to use and from which to borrow ideas. This was compounded by the commercial imperative of a publisher steeped in a traditional approach to the shape and function of a textbook; much energy was expounded in countering this particular agenda. In a very real sense there was a clash of objectives. On the one hand the publishers had, above everything, to consider profitability. On the other hand they accepted that they were an important part of the educational process and so were prepared to publish what might be termed "loss leaders" on the grounds that these might produce spin-off sales elsewhere. The team was committed

to the educational aspects, but as economists and business specialists understood, perhaps more than other curriculum developers might, the pressures that the market place imposed. In the end fair compromises were reached, although as the team now agrees, the pressure of producing a somewhat conventional text meant that the other publications that were originally intended to carry the ethos of the course were less impressive than they might otherwise have been (Barnes, 1997; Wall, 1998; Wales, 1998).

5.8 Values, Assessment and the Role of SCAA

The final assessment of the course is complicated. Paper One tests the Core in the form of an investigative case study, known as the "Strategy Question", plus structured questions. Paper Two tests the Options, again through structured data response. Depending on the combination of option papers that a candidate sits, he or she will either receive an A-level in Economics, or one in Business Studies or one in Economics and Business. Paper Three tests the Portfolio. There is also an AS examination. The board offering these syllabuses was the University of London's Examination and Assessment Council (ULEAC), which became London Examinations and is now EDEXCEL. In order to ensure that the philosophy of the course was translated into its assessment it was suggested that one of us should apply for the post of Chief Examiner, and since I was the only member of the team who had sufficient experience, the assumption was that it would be me. I was appointed in 1994.

As earlier work on the Cambridge Business Studies Project shows (Walmsley in Lines, 1987) there is no doubting the influence that the assessment process has on a curriculum development (*inter alia* Gipps, 1988; Wolf, 1995). This research convinced me that developing the testing regime alongside resources and INSET was a reliable way to ensure a reasonable take-up of a new initiative. However, translating the values and ethos of the course into an examination context was not easy. As we saw in chapter three, the curriculum and assessment environment had changed in the years since 1988. Centralisation had increased markedly, especially in the form of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA), which had grown out of the merger between NCC and SEAC. SCAA were far more proactive in the level of control that they exerted over examination syllabuses and boards, as BIS discovered when it sought approval for its A-level syllabus (chapter four). Given the innovative nature of the Nuffield course it was perhaps inevitable that it would clash with SCAA, which is what had already happened in the case of the Wessex Project when it

attempted change that was perceived as too radical (Leonard & Vidler, 1990: 174). SCAA was in a difficult position in that as a government body it had to be seen as consistent, and therefore to apply rules equally to everyone. This tended to make it somewhat inflexible, and in any case the rules were, arguably, of its own making. It is hard to judge the extent to which changes instigated by SCAA influenced the values base of the Nuffield Project, but they undoubtedly did have an impact. Probably the most profound was on the Portfolio, but the spiral curriculum as well as the syllabus itself, were also affected.

5.8.1 The syllabus and the 'spiral curriculum'

Writing a 'spiral curriculum' was no easy task, since the very nature of 'window opening' meant that topics would be met several times throughout the course. SCAA insisted that each concept should be identified when it was first met. This had two effects. First, because concepts were to be specified only when they were first encountered rather than each time they were met in the spiral, the syllabus looked overcrowded in the early Units and increasingly 'sparse' in the later ones. SCAA insisted that the spaces were 'filled' in order to ensure that the course appeared rigorous in terms of its content, but this carried the danger of over-burdening it - the very thing we were trying to avoid. Second, a teacher seeing that for example, demand and supply analysis was encountered in Unit 1.2 might be encouraged to do *all* of demand and supply at that point, thereby returning to the teaching of concepts in blocks. Again this ran counter to our philosophy.

The nature of the content itself soon became an issue. As the Nuffield project was in progress SCAA decided, for reasons that were never made explicit, that syllabuses should be more consistent and announced that it would define 'subject cores', to which all syllabuses had to conform. The core would consist of 50% of any syllabus with the remaining 50% to be determined by the examination board. At first this appeared to be acceptable, though the proportion chosen was never justified, but in the case of Nuffield, which was bringing together two subject areas, the cores for economics and business studies represented 100% of the syllabus. It was a straight-jacket that meant we had to inject concepts that we considered obsolete and lose others that we felt better projected the values and ethos of the course. Added to this were other impediments to radical change. The fact that the SCAA officer was not a subject specialist made it difficult to get our ideas across at times. Connected to that was the fact that the syllabus was scrutinised by committees whose make-up was never publicly revealed but which we knew contained members who were chief examiners from traditional syllabuses, and thus perhaps having an interest in our efforts not

being totally successful. Also, the syllabus went before the subject committees of both economics and business studies rather than one in tune with the notion of combining the subjects.

It was plain, therefore, that Nuffield would have a difficult time gaining approval. In the end it was granted, but at a cost. All the directors feel that the spiral notion has been lost, at least on paper and that the syllabus now seems overloaded with 'content'. As one director expressed it, "It's threatening us right at the roots of our existence. I have the enduring impression that SCAA choose to seek opinions about our work from people who have vested interests in seeing it fail and I dislike that intensely." This may be overstating the case. Nevertheless, the SCAA methodology has to be questioned if it results in the curtailing of curriculum initiatives. Confidential peer appraisal offers clear benefits, but the danger of secret or semi-secret processes is plain as well. It may be that society's values are changing in this regard. There is now growing pressure for more open and accountable government, as evidenced by the demand for a Freedom of Information Act and a Bill of Rights. One hopes that SCAA's successor, the Qualifications and Assessment Authority (QCA) will recognise this change in values and act accordingly.

5.8.2 The Portfolio

The Portfolio, as we have seen, was originally intended to demonstrate an ongoing engagement with the subjects of economics and business. It was to be a large piece of work containing, for instance, reviews of articles, relevant television programmes, student essays, investigations, reports on field trips and so on. It became clear very early on that assessing it would be difficult, but we believed that it was essential to the transmission of the values that we wanted the course to project. It immediately fell foul of SCAA's rule that a maximum of 25% of the terminal assessment could be teacher marked. There were two further constraints. First, the work would have to be assessed assuming the candidate had completed the two-year course and second it could only consist of a maximum of 5,000 words. Because we had integrated the notion of the developing young person into our thinking, this negated the whole idea of a progressive Portfolio. We believed that teachers would 'store up' Portfolio work until the final few weeks to maximise the age and experience of their candidates and would probably submit just one piece, up to the maximum word limit. The solution, which was resisted by the exam board as much as by SCAA, was for self-contained 'pieces' of Portfolio work to be handed in to Moderators at certain times over the two-year period. In the end there were six, each with a word limit of 1,500.

There was a concern that the word limit would prevent the Portfolios being truly investigative, but there is evidence that increasingly they are (Ellis, 1998). On the other hand there are few signs that the much larger, integrated Portfolios are being created. This is a considerable disappointment and bears particularly on this thesis, since the original Portfolio was a means of recognising and rewarding a maturing set of values over the length of the course. It would have become a kind of intellectual diary with far greater interest and influence than simply its impact on examination grades. Despite its name, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority was to those of us involved, always far more interested in 'assessment' than 'curriculum'.

5.8.3 The Strategy Question

One innovation that the directors believe has worked well is the investigative case study, called 'The Strategy Question' in Paper One of the examination (Barnes, 1997; Wales 1998; Wall, 1988). It was deliberately designed to be a problem solving exercise that quite explicitly had no single 'right answer'. It therefore played a vital part in projecting the values that the team wanted to express. Suggesting to candidates in an examination that there is no simple or single 'right answer' chimes with notion of intellectual freedom and an ability to question economic and business propositions. On the other hand, as the question setter I found it difficult to provide sufficient data from which candidates could work - called 'Evidence' to transmit the ethos of the investigation - without overburdening them with reading material. Nevertheless, like the Portfolio, candidates are beginning to adjust, and the work of the best of them displays exactly the kind of thinking that we were seeking (London Examinations, 1996).

5.8.4 Examination candidate numbers

1998 is only the third year of the Nuffield A-level examination. As Table 5.1 shows, entries have grown from 2074 in 1996 to 3063 in 1997 and 3274 in 1998. First year entries were relatively small, as one might expect from a new syllabus, but the second year's was very encouraging, showing a 48% growth. This trend has not continued, however, with only a 7% growth in the third year. Given a total subject entry (economics and business studies) of 55678, this is only 6% of the market. Nevertheless, it is already considerably larger in terms of entries than NEAB Economics or the BIS A-level.

5.9 Evaluation

All the directors when interviewed, agree that the course has been only a qualified success. Referring back to figure 1.1 on page fifteen, this suggests a lack of what I here call 'congruence', either in content, values or the development of the young person. At this early stage in the Project's life there must be little student or parental pressure to switch syllabuses; the choice rests almost entirely with staff. Can it be, therefore, that the course and its values are not 'congruent' with those of the teachers concerned? There is some evidence that that is the case. Coates (1988) reports that:

"In a number of independent boarding schools, tutors suggested that, although the course might benefit their weaker students there was 'too much emphasis on pupils' own investigations. A more traditional approach and exams suit our students'."

(Coates, 1998: 33)

The directors also feel the same. As one expressed it:

"I don't think a lot of our teachers understood the pedagogical revolution we were looking for. I don't think they knew what the shift in the classroom was going to involve. We never had the courage to say this is very much a questioning course. A culture shift was needed but it was very daunting." (Interview)

and another:

"The spiral approach poses problems for teachers who are not used to it. But the only way to integrate is through the spiral approach. It's too subtle for most people." (Interview)

Both these positions are confirmed by Coates: "Some centres suggested that it was 'hard to get into the *Nuffield way of thinking*'" (Coates, 1998: 30. Emphasis in original) and when one recognises that not all teachers are free to choose a syllabus (*ibid.*: 15), and that they choose courses for reasons that are often less than altruistic - such as the wish to improve recruitment (*ibid.*: 25) - then it could be that the course simply does not fit with their expectations or abilities. It may also be that the INSET was not as effective as it might have been. Certainly one director was strongly of the view that the team should have sought more training in running INSET, or should have been more self-critical than they were. That person also felt that some INSET

should have been classroom based, with the directors themselves doing the teaching, in order to demonstrate the philosophy in action. Both of these arguments have weight. I was the only member of the team who was experienced in the delivery of INSET, but given my part-time status that was one aspect of the curriculum development that I could not get involved in, given the amount of travel and time involved. The rest of the team learnt by doing, and that was not as effective as it might have been.

All curriculum developers set out to achieve certain aims and objectives. Being who they are probably indicates that in one area or another they are at the frontier of their subject and its delivery in the classroom. They may therefore wish to change the content and/or the way it is taught. They will almost certainly want to improve student learning. Crucial, in my view, is the impact they believe they are likely to have on values; in the case of Nuffield that meant encouraging a critique of economic and business systems. They all face one problem, however, and that is how to reach the students, because at least in the initial stages teachers will mediate the material. If school staff believe that the practical and/or intellectual changes required of them are too great, or if the values base of the curriculum development clashes with the ones they believe should be 'passed on', then the initiative is likely to fail through a lack of 'congruence'. No matter how good it is, if it is not adopted then it is wasted effort. Curriculum developers walk a tightrope between innovation and conservation. Generally the Nuffield team *were* radical, although in deciding not to make information technology a compulsory element of the course, we showed a fear of pushing teachers one step too far. However, the very act of working in curriculum development creates a synergy of its own, as new ideas are introduced, brainstormed and debated. As one director expresses it:

"The danger of curriculum change is that those who instigate the change project themselves on to the teachers in the classroom and assume that everyone else out there in the world can undergo the same transformation in their perceptions and methods and confidence that they themselves are undergoing as curriculum developers."

(Interview)

There is no doubt that as individuals the Nuffield team changed. By 1998 none of us had been actively teaching in classrooms for at least eight years and yet we were convinced of our abilities to suggest to others how to do it. There is nothing sinister in this; instead of what can often be a narrow single-school perspective we received inputs from a variety of sources, we read and reflected. In the end, like the marketing

department of a firm trying out a new product, we offered the curriculum to the consumers and let the market decide.

5.10 Conclusion

The Nuffield course set out to achieve a number of objectives. The first was to create a new subject that combined the two disciplines of economics and business studies. This has probably been achieved. Exam entry numbers in the combined course are encouraging. In 1995 the team raised funding from Nuffield and British Petroleum to create a GCSE that also joins the two. At A-level another exam board is offering a 'combined' course, albeit through separate modules, which again suggests a new market has been identified.

The second objective was to change teaching. There is less certainty about this and the little research evidence available suggests that it has, but only in a limited number of centres. For this, amongst other things, one must question the effectiveness of the INSET that was undertaken. On the other hand, to judge by the declining percentage of candidates opting for the single economics A-level, it is probable that economics teachers have moved forward in their pedagogic thinking.

The third objective was to improve learning, and in particular to change the approach to values through the longitudinal themes. The spiral curriculum was a radical attempt to acknowledge growing maturity in learners. This notion is now embedded in the course and is reinforced through the assessment system. But it is in this arena that we must question whether 'curriculum congruence' has been achieved. The early indications of large numbers opting for the course, with its centrality of values and a recognition of growing maturity, have not been fulfilled. Whilst accepting that at the time of writing uncertainties regarding the future of post-16 provision mitigate against change, there exists the possibility that only the more forward, radical -thinking teachers and schools have been attracted to the course, and that 'congruence' has yet to be achieved in the rump of institutions, which are content to remain with more conventional, 'safe' syllabuses. One conclusion that may be drawn, therefore, is that this course, like others bearing the Nuffield name, is somewhat 'ahead of its time', and that when the majority of teachers and their students recognise the importance of its message, many more will adopt it.

5.11 References

- Abbs, P. (1987) "Towards a Coherent Arts Aesthetic" in Abbs, P. (Ed.) *Living Powers: The Arts in Education*, London: Falmer Press.
- Abbs, P. (Ed.) (1987) *Living Powers: The Arts in Education*, London: Falmer Press.
- Barnes, S. (1984) "Through the Classroom Walls" in Simkin, D., and Simkin, J. (Eds.) *Curriculum Development in Action*, Brighton: Tressell Publications.
- Barnes, S. (1991b) *A is for Alienation, Art and A level*, Paper presented at Langrish House, Hampshire, 5 October.
- Barnes, S. (1991a) *Why Does the Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project. Need a Debate about Fundamental Issues?* Paper presented at Langrish House Hampshire, 5 October.
- Barnes, S. (1995) *Corporate Responsibility*, Harlow: Longman.
- Barnes, S. (1995) *Nuffield Data Book*, Harlow: Longman.
- Barnes, S. (1997) Interview. 14/8. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Bruner, J. S. (1960, reprinted 1977) *The Process of Education*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. S., (1966) *Towards a Theory of Instruction*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Coates, G., Hurd, S., and Anderton, A. (1998) *Nuffield Economics and Business A-level: An Evaluation of Curriculum Integration*, Staffordshire University.
- Dahlgren, L. O. (1984) "Outcomes of Learning" in Marton, F., Hounsell, D., and Entwistle, N. (Eds.) *The Experience of Learning*, Scottish Academic Press.
- Devons, E. (1961) *Essays in Economics*, London: Allen and Unwin.
- Dransfield, R., Yeomans, B., and Wales, J. (1995) *Resources and Expansion*, Harlow: Longman.

- Ellis, B. (1998) "Nuffield First Impressions" in *Business Review Teacher's Notes*, Vol. 5 No. 2.
- Gipps, C. (1988) "What Exams would mean for Primary Education " in Lawton, D. and Chitty, C. *Bedford Way Papers/33. The National Curriculum*, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Guratsky, S. (1984) "The Adequacy of A-level Syllabuses" in *Economics*, Vol. XX: No. 2: Summer
- Kay, J. (1993) "Economics in Business" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 1, No. 1 part 2. pp. 74-78 Summer.
- Kwong, J. (1997) "An American Perspective on Environmental Literacy: A New Goal for Environmental Education" in Aldrich-Moodie, B., and Kwong, J. *Environmental Education*, London: Institute of Economic Affairs.
- Lee, N., and Entwistle, H. (1975) "Basic Education and Educational Theory" in Lee, N. (Ed.) *Teaching Economics*, (2nd Edition) London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Leonard, C., and Vidler, C. (1990) "Wessex Modular Business/Economics" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4, Winter.
- Levacic, R. (1987) "What Changes Should be made to the A-level Syllabuses for the 1990s?" in *Economics*, XXIV, No. 4, Winter.
- Lines, D. R. (1987) *Business Studies: The Search for a Paradigm*, Unpublished M. A. dissertation, London: ULIE.
- Lines, D. R. (1988) "The Future Direction of Advanced level Economics" in *Economics*, Vol. XXIV, Part 2, No. 102, Summer.
- Lipsey, R. G. (1963) *An Introduction to Positive Economics*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson.
- Livesey, F. (1986) "Whatever Happened to Economics" in *Economics*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, Summer.

- London Examinations (1996) *Advanced Level/Advanced Supplementary Nuffield Economics and Business June 1996 Subject Report*, London Examinations.
- Longman (1993) *Nuffield Economics and Business Studies: Trial Material*
Memorandum to Project Team. February
- Marton, F. (1989) *Phenomenography and 'The Art of Teaching All Things to All Men'*,
Paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Research Association,
New Orleans.
- Maunder, P., Miller, L., Myers, D., and Wall, N. (1987, First Edition) *Economics Explained*, London: Collins Educational.
- Naish, M., Rawling, E., and Hart, C. (1987) "The Curriculum Framework: a Basis for Change" in *The Contribution of a Curriculum Development Project to 16 -19 Education*, Harlow: Longman.
- Ramsden, P. (1988) *Improving Learning - New Perspectives*, London: Kogan Page.
- Robbins, L. (1954) *The Economist in the Twentieth Century*, London: Macmillan.
- Thomas, L. (1991) "A New Perspective on Learning - What does it mean for Economics?" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVII, Part 2, Summer.
- Wales, J. (1990) *Investigating Social Issues*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Wales, J. (1995) *Poverty and Wealth*, Harlow: Longman.
- Wales, J. (1997) Interview. 27th August. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Wall, N. (1986), ""Drawing a line: What are the Limits at A-level?" in *Economics*, Vol. XXII, Part 3, Autumn.
- Wall, N. (1991), "The 16-19 Economics Curriculum" in Whitehead, D., and Dyer, D. (Eds.) *New Developments in Economics and Business Education*, London: Kogan Page.

Wall, N. (Ed.) (1994a) *Nuffield Economic & Business Student's Book*, Harlow: Longman.

Wall, N., (1994b) *Competition and Control*. Harlow: Longman.

Wall, N. (1995d) *Government Objectives . Can we Control the Economy?* Harlow: Longman.

Wall, N. (Ed.) (1995a) *Nuffield Activity Copymasters*, Harlow: Longman.

Wall, N. (Ed.) (1995b) *Nuffield Teacher's Resources*, Harlow: Longman.

Wall, N. (Ed.) (1995c) *Nuffield Answer Book*, Harlow: Longman.

Wall, N. (1998) Interview. 23rd August. Tape recording in author's possession.

Wall, N., Marcousé, I., Lines, D., & Martin, B., (1996) *The Complete A-Z Economics & Business Studies Handbook* London: Hodder and Stoughton

Welford, R. (1984) "Broadening the A-level Syllabuses" in *Economics*, Vol. XX, No. 2, Summer.

Willan, B. (1992) *Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project: Publishing proposals* Fax to team 5 June.

Wolf, A. (1995) *An Assessment-Driven System: Education and Training in England and Wales*, ICRA Research Monographs No. 3, London: ULIE

Wood, A (1995) *Business Strategies. How are Decisions Made?* Harlow: Longman.

CHAPTER 6

THE GENERAL NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION IN BUSINESS

6.1 Introduction

The last two chapters analysed curriculum development projects in Business Studies and Economics. Both BIS and Nuffield were firmly rooted in the mainstream of GCSE and Advanced levels. They were designed to be taught mainly in schools rather than F.E. colleges and they were aimed at students whose progression through education might be termed "conventional", namely GCSEs followed by A-levels and then Higher Education (Wolf, 1996).

This chapter examines a somewhat different curriculum development, General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs). It is important to this thesis for a number of reasons. First, because GNVQs have their origin in the vocational education and training sector and because they offer an alternative to A-levels, it is necessary to analyse and compare their values position. This is given added weight because, unlike conventional A-levels they have been taken up mainly in Further Education (FEDA, 1997). Second, within the range of GNVQ subjects, Business was in the first wave to be piloted and it quickly dominated in terms of student numbers, a position which it continues to hold. Following its introduction to the 16-19 cohort, a "Part One GNVQ" is being piloted (1998) in schools for the 14-16 age group, where again Business attracts the largest numbers of students. Its size therefore makes the consideration of values and maturation especially important. Third, there are parallels with other curriculum developments examined in earlier chapters, which will supply comparative data. Like BIS, GNVQs were a response to the changing needs of a particular student cohort and both have strong I.T. components. Like the 1988 National Curriculum, GNVQs were centrally planned and supported, but they were also introduced with insufficient consideration for all the implications, with the result that they have been subjected to strong criticism. Such criticism has led to a stream of revisions, both in subject content and especially in assessment, which has been seen as burdensome and inconsistent (OFSTED, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996; FEFC, 1994; Capey, 1995; ICRA, 1995; Smithers, 1993; Wolf, 1994, 1995a).

Problems with assessment have, over the life of GNVQs, been partly responsible for GNVQ Advanced Business moving away from its vocational roots towards a more

academic pathway¹, which has called into question the need for both A-level Business Studies and GNVQ Business (Young and Leney, 1997; Taylor, 1998). The argument for dropping one of the two has added support given the desire to reduce the number of syllabuses on offer (Dearing, 1996) and the fact that students increasingly see GNVQ Advanced subjects as substitutes for A-levels (FEDA, 1994, 1997; DfEE, 1997). The chapter will therefore analyse them both to see the extent of any overlap, centring on the values that they impart and their consideration of maturation.

6.2 The historical context

During the 1980s it became increasingly apparent that, in comparison with her closest economic rivals the UK's post-16 participation rates were amongst the lowest, and that this low participation was also reflected in poor levels of achievement (Finegold, 1990; Raffe, 1992). At the same time the UK had the highest numbers of economically active 16-19 year-olds in the OECD but also the highest levels of youth unemployment. Work-based training was "low level" but as many as 30% were "involved in emergency training schemes, such as the Youth Training Scheme which soon developed a reputation for low quality and low qualifications outcomes" (Hodgson & Spours, 1997: 5).

In terms of participation, the situation was radically altered by the 1990s, as table 6.1 overleaf shows. Nevertheless, despite improvements in both GCSE and A-level results (Hodgson & Spours, 1997: 6) there were still doubts about attainment overall, especially because it was short-lived and fell away rapidly at 17 and 18 (Raffe, 1992). Hodgson and Spours argue that greater participation rates were not the result of educational reforms but were "the reaction of young people and their parents to the economic and wider societal changes of the late 1980s and early 1990s", and in a sentence that echoes the analysis in chapter four on the creation of BIS, that:

¹ Hodgson and Spours (1997: 20) prefer the term 'tracks' to 'pathways' but agree that they "are often used synonymously." I prefer pathway simply because it suggests something less constricting than a track. After all, students do mix A-levels (and especially GCSE resists) with GNVQs. (FEDA, 1997: 62) Hodgson and Spours argue that the degree of difference between two qualifications determines whether they constitute a track or not, and the differences are defined by four dimensions of distinctiveness: purposes, content, assessment and structure. "For instance", they say "both A-levels and GNVQ could be described as tracks, because they are meant to serve different purposes and have very little overlap of content and assessment." The evidence in this chapter suggests that such distinctiveness is not as apparent as it once was, certainly as far as Business is concerned.

Academic Year	FT education			PT education	Training	Total Participation
	Schools	FE	HE			
1991-92	19.1	23.4	4.8	12.3	10.0	69.5
1992-93	20.2	25.8	5.7	10.2	10.5	72.5
1993-94	20.9	28.0	6.1	9.2	10.4	74.0
1994-95	21.0	28.3	6.5	8.7	10.2	74.9
1995-96	21.6	29.1	6.4	8.3	10.3	75.6
1996-97	21.7	28.0	6.4	8.0	11.3	75.4

Source: DFEE News 159/97

Table 6.1 Participation (%) of 16-18 year olds in education and training.

"The new vocational qualifications, which were introduced into the system from 1986 onwards, and particularly General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) were essentially a reactive response to increasing participation rates rather than an incentive to increased participation or achievement."

(Hodgson and Spours, 1997: 6)

As we saw in chapters three and four, a "reactive response" is not the best way to inform curriculum development. It suggests superficial thinking, especially when it comes to values, maturation and any interaction between the two. Certainly, as with the National Curriculum, GNVQs have been subject to constant criticism since their inception, a sure sign of inadequate and shallow planning.

Wider participation meant that traditional A-level courses were inappropriate for the majority and would become more so as the economy increasingly demanded a flexible, re-trainable work-force (Dearing, 1996: 63). There was also the fear that increasing numbers of students taking A-level would dilute standards, something which governments had vigorously resisted, as exemplified in the refusal to accept the recommendations of the Higginson Committee (DES, 1988). Finally, as we saw in chapter three, there was a centralising tendency in educational matters that was underpinned by a philosophical belief in the power of demand-led markets and of individual students and institutions to determine their own destinies (Hodgson and Spours, *op. cit.*: 9).

In 1991 the government introduced its White Paper: *Education and Training for the 21st Century*. It was wide-ranging and was "designed to set the agenda for

government policy on post-16 education and training for the next five years"² (*ibid.*). It established the principles of three pathways or tracks,

"....with distinctive curricula and assessment regimes. The two dominant features of these proposals were first, the attempt to 'retrench' the academic track by restricting participation in A-levels through assessment policy; and second, the efforts to encourage participation away from the academic track and into the broad vocational track by introducing GNVQs which were intended to be delivered by schools as well as colleges." (*ibid.*: 9)

6.3 GNVQs, the Competence Model and Values

The debate over the extent to which GNVQs represented a way of maintaining separate and distinctive 'tracks' or whether they were instead a means of providing a bridge between separate pathways is not central to this thesis, except the extent to which different pathways influence the values dimension. This will be dealt with in more detail below. Nevertheless, in requiring GNVQs to have "an underpinning to the strictly vocational NVQ" (Dearing, 1996: 3.9), they incorporated much of the vocational qualification's philosophy, which emphasised competence. They also used the language of NVQs, so instead of *syllabuses*, GNVQs had *specifications* which were broken down into *units*, *elements*, *evidence indicators*, *performance criteria* and *range statements* (White Paper, 1991; NCVQ, 1993a; Hodgkinson & Mattinson, 1994; FEDA, 1997).

The 1991 White Paper stated that,

"General NVQs should cover broad occupational areas, and offer opportunities to develop relevant knowledge and understanding, and to gain an appreciation of how to apply them at work."

It suggested that GNVQs should also,

² Although this chapter concentrates on GNVQ, the White Paper also had an influence on A-levels. For instance, it limited the amount of teacher-assessed coursework (see chapter five). It is argued that this restriction was another way of limiting numbers on the academic track (Hodgson and Spours, 1997: 9; Young, 1997: 29).

- Offer a broad preparation for employment as well as an accepted route to higher level qualifications, including higher education;
- require the demonstration of a range of skills and the application of knowledge and understanding relevant to the related occupations;
- be of equal standing with academic qualifications of the same level;
- be clearly related to occupationally specific NVQs, so that young people can progress quickly and effectively from one to another;
- be sufficiently distinctive from occupationally specific NVQs to ensure that there is no confusion between the two;
- be suitable for use by full time students in college, and if appropriate in schools, who have limited opportunities to demonstrate competence in the workplace." (DES, 1991: 3)

It can be seen that this set the new qualifications a difficult task. On the one hand there was a clear, re-iterated emphasis on the link with occupations, and on the other with academic qualifications and a route to higher education. There was a recognition that schools and college were not able to provide the facilities to practice work-based competence assessment and yet students were required to demonstrate a range of skills relevant to related occupations. As we saw with BIS, which attempted to combine an outcomes-based competence assessment of I.T. with a formal assessment of Business Studies, such an approach can lead to questionable or inconsistent outcomes (Surridge, 1994).

Competence assessment also strikes at the heart of the values issue. In order to assess 'competence' the criteria have to be defined in advance, and any aspect of knowledge and understanding that occurs outside those criteria cannot, indeed *should* not be included. As Jessup³ argued,

"Within a competence-based model of qualifications there is no justification for assessing knowledge for its own sake but only for its contribution to competent performance." (Jessup, 1991: 123)

Thus, when taking a driving test, spending weeks studying the workings of the internal combustion engine is a waste of time, since it is irrelevant to the test (although it may be relevant to the candidate's overall competence as a driver). On

³ Gilbert Jessup was the Deputy Chief Executive of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and a firm believer in and advocate of competence based assessment.

the other hand, such technical knowledge would be vital were the person to be judged on their competence as a mechanic, although again that person would be judged on an ability to, say, replace a cylinder head gasket rather than be able to explain its theoretical function.

Of course, when we take our car to the garage we expect something more from our mechanic than an ability to replace faulty parts - what we expect is *fault finding* as a first stage. However since this is part of a process rather than an outcome, such diagnostic skills have no place in a competency model (Marshall, 1991). As Wolf puts it,

"Elements of competence which deal directly with process....are, by contrast rejected as insufficiently concerned with the final competence, as are any elements which are about knowing and understanding underlying theories. Basic skills such as mathematics and communication can appear only in the context of the performance, not as separately listed or assessed concerns."

(Wolf, 1995a: 20)

Furthermore, in judging competence it is necessary to break down tasks into smaller and smaller areas so that they *become* assessable (Popham, 1984); the driving test examiner has a series of tick-boxes: can perform a hill-start, an emergency stop and so on. Because the functions have to be broken down in this way, it is necessary to start the testing process at a level which as much as possible ensures reliability (although as research has shown, the assessor is affected by the context of the test and by his or her values and bias - *inter alia* Gipps and Wood, 1981; Wolf and Silver 1986; Pollard *et al*, 1994). Thus the main objectives of the competency model - that of precision and transparency (Jessup, 1991) then become a weakness, as we saw with National Curriculum assessment:

"....this goal of precision has proved elusive. In pursuit of it, English competence-based awards have become ever more complex in structure, and ever more weighted down with detail. This is not because of some problem specific to competence-based assessment or NVQs in particular. On the contrary. Once we see them as examples of 'criterion-referenced' approach, we can also see that this ever-receding goal of total clarity derives not from bad luck or incompetence, but is actually inherent in the methodology adopted. The more serious and rigorous the attempts to specify the domains

being assessed, the narrower the domain itself becomes, without, in fact, becoming fully transparent. The attempt to map out free-standing content and standards leads, again and again, to a never-ending spiral of specifications."

(Wolf, 1995a: 55. Also cited in chapter three.)

There is then, a bottom-up approach, with holistic competence only confirmed by incremental testing on the way. The trainee driver's competence rests on an ability to perform a hill-start, reverse around a corner and so on, not because the examiner "feels" safe or "believes" the candidate to be a competent driver overall.

The more philosophical the question, the harder it is for the test to measure competence. Thus, neither the person sitting the driving test, nor the mechanic removing the cylinder head gasket has any need for knowledge pertaining to the place of the car within society - its effects on the environment, people's health and safety, individual freedom, mobility and so on and therefore there is no incentive to acquire it (Ashworth and Saxton, 1990). After all, what would being "competent" mean in these contexts?

According to Marshall (1991), this reductionism reflects a functionalist sociology which regards the overall employment function as a social organism. Within the organism it is necessary to isolate units and elements of competence, because they are the primary functions of the skill. However, they are still too large to be tested holistically and so they are further broken down into performance criteria which are the sub-functions of the primary ones. The function of the primary and sub-functions then becomes the maintenance of the social organism.

The implications of the competency model then, is an acceptance of the *status quo*. The values inherent or underlying the competence being tested are not and cannot be challenged (Barnett, 1994; Thomas, 1996; Bloomer, 1998). In a course concerned with teaching about business this is profound, because as we saw in the two previous chapters, the notion of a *critique* of business is central and a hall-mark of an educational experience in the subject.

6.4 GNVQ Business and GCE Business Studies: a comparison of their Values.

6.4.1 Introduction

In the following sections the different approaches of GNVQ and GCE A-level will be analysed, using GNVQ Business and A-level Business Studies as exemplars. The first shows the rapid growth in terms of candidate numbers of the Advanced GNVQ in Business, to a point where it has been questioned whether A-level Business Studies should also be offered. The issue of co-existence is important to the thesis because I shall argue that the two are distinct (though becoming less so), both in terms of their structure and their assessment, and that this distinctiveness results in a different outcome in terms of the values that they project and in their acceptance or otherwise, of the notion of maturation. Second, a detailed analysis of the different ways of approaching the teaching of the two courses is provided, noting the emphasis on *process* in GNVQ as opposed to *product* in A-level. GNVQ accepts that, given guidance, as students mature their work will improve and so they are encouraged to re-submit it. In contrast, A-levels are usually and largely determined by an examination at the end of the course. I shall argue that this difference will affect the way the two courses are approached and that this will in turn influence the way the students perceive the functions and values of business. I believe, as I argued in chapter five, that an holistic view is vital if we wish students to question their own values and those of business in the community generally. Although GNVQ attempts to provide such an insight there is evidence that it is failing to do so because of its unit structure. Similarly, as we saw with in the last chapter, modularity at A-level can have the same effect, so that an overarching perspective is in danger of being lost to a mechanistic one, made up solely of the constituent parts of business, such as marketing, finance, accounting and so on. This argument brings us to the final section, which analyses the specific subject content of both GNVQ Business and A-level Business Studies. The content is fundamental, for in a sense what is actually taught does have a profound impact upon the values that the two courses project; with vocational courses traditionally being what might be termed 'value neutral', in the sense that success or otherwise is judged on observed competence, whilst A-levels are often seen as more reflective, requiring students to explore issues beyond the purely instrumental (see chapter eight).

6.4.2 The background to GNVQ Business

GNVQ Advanced Business was piloted in the academic year 1992/93 as one of the first cohort of subjects alongside Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism, Art

and Design and Manufacturing. Since it was widely seen as a substitute for BTEC qualifications (FEDA, 1994: 54), which in the past had attracted large numbers of students, GNVQ Advanced Business quickly established itself with the largest candidate entry (27,394 in 1988; the next biggest, Leisure and Tourism attracted 14,011). Such numbers, alongside those at A-level in Business Studies, brought into question whether the difference between the two courses justified their continued existence as separate entities (*Beeline*, 1997; Midgley, 1997). This was given emphasis with the Dearing Report's recommendation to reduce the number of syllabuses at A-level (Dearing, 1996: 87), as well as the research evidence showing that A-level Business Studies was one of the 'easier' A-levels (*ibid.*: Appendix G3).

There were in any case moves to bring A-levels and GNVQ into closer alignment - something which has increased in momentum with the changes planned for the Year 2000 (DFEE, 1997). This intention was signalled in the subject core for A-level Business Studies written in 1994 (although a similar statement did not appear in the revised version that was published in 1997 [SCAA, 1997]):

"The A/AS subject core has been constructed with the Advanced GNVQ in Business in mind. A and AS syllabus developers should be able to devise syllabuses that enable the range statements and performance criteria present in some of the units in Advanced Business to be met. They may be able to develop modular syllabuses that allow students to transfer between courses leading to GCE A/AS examinations and the Advanced GNVQ in Business." (SCAA, 1994: 5)

The fundamental questions therefore are: to what extent are A-level Business Studies and GNVQ Business different, and more specifically, do they project different values? In the comparative analysis that follows a modular A-level syllabus, UCLES Modular Business Studies Subject 9514 will be used, since it most closely approximates to the unit system of GNVQ. It will be compared with the latest GNVQ Business Specification currently in use (NCVQ, 1995a).⁴

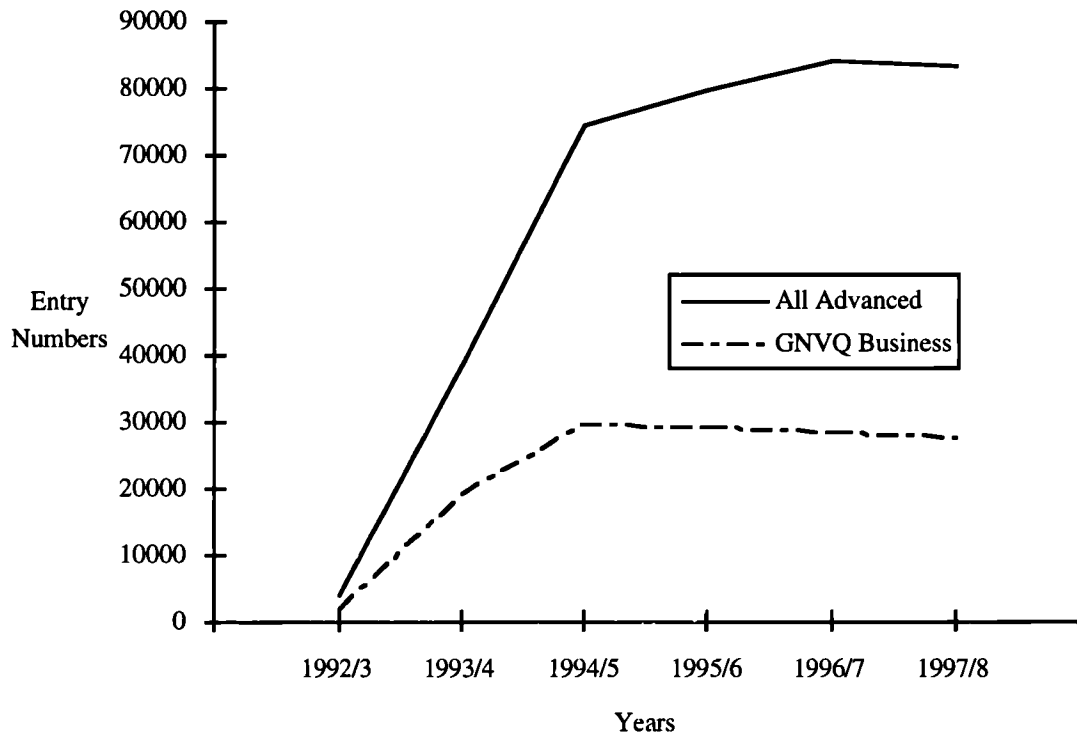
6.4.3 *Assessment Objectives*

Currently, Advanced GNVQs are designed to be taught in twice the time of a GCE A-level, and in consequence to be the equivalent of two GCEs, although at the time of

⁴ At the time of writing two other specifications were going through pilot stages.

writing this is under review. A GNVQ pass corresponds to grades D and E at GCE; a merit, grade C; and a distinction, grades A and B (NCVQ, 1993b).

GNVQ Business Registrations 1992-1998



	1992/3	1993/4	1994/5	1995/6	1996/7	1997/8
All Advanced	3964	38125	74461	79458	83985	83098
GNVQ Business	1849	19112	29584	29083	28475	27394
Business as % of total	46.6	50.1	39.7	36.6	33.9	32.9

Notes:

- Registrations are students at the start of the two year course.
- 1997/98 figures show registrations to June 1998.
- Data were collected at different times of the year and are therefore only indicative.
- GNVQ Advanced courses were introduced progressively, which explains much of the drop in the percentage of the total registering for Business.
- The rate of converting registrations into a full award has been variable, at around half. For the year 1/8/95 to 31/7/96 there were 22,853 candidates tested. 59.8% achieved a full award. For year ending 31/7/97 of 28,415, 48.7% achieved a full award and for year ending 31/7/98, of 29,467 it was 51.9%. This makes GNVQ Business considerably less important in terms of completions than A-level Business Studies, although the two are not directly comparable, since GNVQ candidates can complete partial awards over a number of years. From 1997 these were known as 'active' candidates.

Source: QCA; Joint Council for National Vocational Awarding Bodies

Fig. 6.1 GNVQ Advanced Business and Total GNVQ Advanced registrations 1992 - 1998

As we saw above, the history and philosophy of GNVQs are derived from NVQs, and the terminology is quite different from A-level as a result. At A-level, Assessment Objectives are specified, which when they are achieved allow students to demonstrate non subject-specific skills: typically application, analysis and evaluation, but all within the subject's context (SCAA, 1997: 14). In contrast, Assessment Objectives are not specified as such in GNVQs, since the award of a certificate depends on the demonstration of particular learning outcomes. Nevertheless, language familiar to A-level business studies is used:

"The Business GNVQ enables students to develop creative and analytical thinking through investigating businesses and markets, analysing business systems, proposing improvements to systems..."
(NCVQ, 1995a: 13)

If we compare this to the *Introduction* in the UCLES Modular Business Studies we see:

"The syllabus is concerned with a problem-solving approach to Business Studies to help candidates understand the nature and working of business and industry. Emphasis is on encouraging candidates to develop their ability to recognise, define, analyse and evaluate problems." (UCLES, 1996: 12)

The most significant difference is the word "evaluate" in the A-level document. The skill of evaluation is the highest in Bloomian⁵ terms and evaluation must surely have an impact on the values base: it is often only when evaluating a business system that questioning the underlying assumptions becomes important. There is thus a significant difference between what GNVQ and A-level business courses set out to achieve with students, reflecting the particular value positions held by course developers about the content of the subject.

6.4.4 Teacher Assessment

An important difference in the assessment regimes between the two is the degree of teacher-marked work. A-levels are restricted, typically to between 20% and 25% of the total. In contrast, GNVQs are almost wholly teacher assessed through a student

⁵ Bloom's notion of a hierarchy of cognitive or learning processes has been subject to critical analysis by a number of authors (*inter alia* Madaus, Woods and Nuttall, 1973; Wood, 1991), but synthesis and evaluation are shown to be split off entirely from what might be termed a 'general intelligence factor'.

portfolio, which provides evidence to satisfy all the performance criteria⁶ and range requirements. In addition, GNVQs also use multiple choice tests, which are designed to confirm coverage of the essential underpinning knowledge (NCVQ, 1993a).⁷

The effect the different levels of teacher marked work has on values and maturation is significant, although somewhat unpredictable. In chapter five we saw how the original Nuffield Portfolio, which was designed to illustrate and support the maturing values of the students following the course, was restricted by the necessity to limit the coursework element in the overall assessment pattern. The truncated version of the Portfolio that now exists still achieves part of the ethos of the original, but not its entirety. Had the Nuffield team been allowed as much freedom as GNVQ, then the Portfolio would have been quite different. That said, GNVQ assessment poses its own problems both for students and especially for teachers, in terms of workload. The competence model implicitly accepts the principle of maturation, in that any work submitted for marking can theoretically be re-submitted an infinite number of times if the student feels he or she can improve it. This places an enormous strain on teaching staff and in practice is usually constrained either by 'house rules' or by students simply not bothering to re-submit. In fact GNVQ requires a consistently high level of work throughout the two years of the Advanced course and the award has experienced a high level of non-completions since its introduction as we saw in figure 6.1 (Atkinson, 1996; FEDA, 1997: 56).

It is also impossible to say that all GNVQ work maintains and projects consistent standards and values; clearly assignments that are set by individual teachers are likely to reflect the values of those individuals. Indeed, it is precisely this degree of inconsistency that in 1995 prompted the Manpower Services Commission to employ a research team, of which I was a member, to examine the case for centrally set assignments (ICRA, 1995). The following year it was decided that one such assignment should become a part of the overall GNVQ assessment regime. That, and a change away from multiple-choice tests as confirmation of knowledge, towards more conventional examinations, indicates a coming together of GNVQ and A-levels in terms of their assessment patterns, which may in turn suggest a more consistent approach to values. This will be explored in more detail below.

⁶ The requirement to cover all the performance criteria has been another burden: "Students are required to cover all the performance criteria in GNVQ courses. This led to some assignments being artificially designed to fill gaps left by incomplete coverage in earlier assignments and to students undertaking work which was superficial and insufficiently challenging" (FEFC, 1994: 20).

⁷ GNVQs are subject to verification checks in order to ensure reliability and consistency between centres, but this system has been subject to consistent criticism from both OFSTED and FEFC inspectors as being too concerned with the process and systems and not concerned enough with standards of the work produced.

6.4.5 Generic Skills

Another difference between A-level and GNVQ is that a GNVQ candidate in addition to subject specific work, is also required to complete assessed units of work in the so-called 'key skills' of Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology. Whilst A-level syllabuses often emphasise, in particular, the need to use Information Technology - indeed in the UCLES Modular Business Studies Syllabus 9514 it is an explicit aim (UCLES: 12) - it is not assessed. As research shows, if I.T. is not examined it is usually ignored in the classroom (Hurd, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1995; Chambers, 1987; Tribe, 1994). Skills that might also be regarded as 'key' within a business context, such as decision making and problem solving, are important in both A-level Business Studies and GNVQ Business,⁸ but the assessment regime of GNVQs includes others of a more generic nature, such as the way students plan, carry out and evaluate their work, and in particular whether they can do it independently. (NCVQ, 1994: 10-11).

One of the early criticisms of GNVQs was that the quality of the work itself was not examined. The competence model required assessment of just three themes: Planning, Information Seeking and Handling and Evaluation. It was therefore possible for students to write assignments that were well planned, demonstrate that they could find information and process it and then make critical comments on the way the data had been collected, without possessing much, if any subject knowledge, or understanding of its underlying values. This was compounded by the acceptance of maturation in GNVQ, which allows candidates to re-submit their work after it has been initially assessed. Clearly it was in the interest of any candidate whose work had been marked down on one of the process themes to improve that aspect rather than anything else, with the result that Merits and Distinctions were awarded to students whose subject knowledge could be, at best, limited. Given the expectations of parity between A-level and GNVQs this situation could not continue, and in September 1994 a new theme, called "Quality of Outcomes" was introduced (Dearing, 1996: 76) to answer this criticism.⁹

In contrast, A-levels are often censured for their emphasis on subject knowledge, which constrains rather than liberates thinking (Barnett, 1994) and for their all-or-

⁸ Although, whether they are assessed or not is another matter. As Dransfield puts it, "What percentage of your particular GNVQ involves the learning of narrowly prescribed chunks of knowledge and what percentage encourages critical thinking? You can probably answer that one of (*sic*) the top of your head - it probably comes to a fairly rounded percentage." (Dransfield, 1998: 32)

⁹ Although it is not the subject of this chapter, there are signs that NVQs are also changing and moving away from being solely based on competence tested outcomes. In 1995 the revised *NVQ Criteria and Guidance* put greater emphasis on the accompanying knowledge base for qualifications.

nothing "high stakes" summative examinations (Gipps, 1994: 34) that generally take place over a few weeks in the early summer at the end of a two-year course of study, and which may determine life chances regardless of the candidate's state of anxiety, health, personal circumstances and so on at the time. Although the introduction of modules at A-level has ameliorated this pressure to a certain extent - candidates who feel they can improve their grade can re-sit first year modules of UCLES 9514 Business Studies in year two, or even carry results forward for up to five years, with all the advantages of deeper and longer study as well as maturity that this confers - the contrast between this system and that of GNVQs remains quite marked.

One of the functions of summative assessment is to categorise candidates (*ibid.*). In the case of GCEs there is an array of categories: pass grades A to E, then N and U, whereas GNVQs have only non completion, pass, merit and distinction.¹⁰ The basis of GCE categorisation is inevitably subtle, but is largely determined by a candidate's ability to recognise and translate subject knowledge into a different context. This means that while the *content* of GCE syllabuses remains vital, it is not the only ingredient required for examination success. Increasingly it is the ability of students to translate, manipulate and interpret the content which is tested. Thus, for example, many GCE A-level Business Studies examinations use case studies as instruments because they represent different scenarios from the ones the candidates have experienced elsewhere. An ability to identify a different context is important. The level of motivation of a sole trader when the economy falters, for example, will vary depending on whether he is twenty or sixty, whether he has survived recessions before, whether he has a family to support and even, perhaps if 'he' is a 'she'! It is the ability to evaluate the circumstances of the particular business environment that separates the good candidate from the weak one.

It might be argued that in contrast to A-level candidates who are presented with different scenarios in an external examination, GNVQ candidates have more influence over their assessment performance. First, the assignment is set by their teacher and this will inevitably take into account local circumstances (ICRA, 1995). Second, the work will generally be marked by the same teacher who sets the task. Third, there is always the opportunity to re-submit work which is unsatisfactory. The areas that are tested in GNVQ: Planning, Information Seeking and Handling, Evaluation and Quality of Outcomes are different from A-level and therefore will result in a different

¹⁰ However, the latest proposals under discussion will draw GNVQ and A-levels closer. GNVQ candidates will accumulate "points" through their portfolio work and their test scores which will be added together at the end of the course and will determine the final grade (A to E) overall (RSA, 1998a).

student profile at the end. This raises an issue, however, since on the one hand it could be argued that if they were identical there would be no justification for the continued existence of the two models, but on the other, the two qualifications are seeking parity of esteem (Dearing, 1996; DfEE, 1997). The problem may be a general perception of what one might term an A-level standard, which probably equates in most people's mind to a body of subject knowledge that can be recalled in examinations. These are not the skills that GNVQ develops, but that does not necessarily make the ones that it does, inferior. The problem is that employers continue to rely on academic results, especially A-levels, as a means of judging suitability, rather than vocational qualifications (Ward, 1996; Smithers, 1998). This might explain why, in 1998, more candidates opted for A-level Business Studies than GNVQ Business.

In this context, it is of interest to examine the views of one student who studied both A-level Business Studies and GNVQ Business. In a speech to a group of Norwegian teachers, Paul Abbot said:

"The relationship between these two courses lies only in its subject matter and the word level in its title.¹¹ Apart from that they are taught in completely different styles and require dissimilar skills. The GNVQ relies on the student. He or she must gather information. The student must acquire the skills used in the everyday running of an organisation, and retain the theory of business as a whole. The general idea being that this is the start of a training process for a job. In contrast the 'A' level depends on the teacher progressively feeding information to the student, who is then expected to go away and recite thisin any context that *might* be thrown at them in the space of three hours, along with all the other theory that is involved. The point I'm trying to get across to you is the different skills that are required, and the main differences is the slow progression towards completing the course. For the 'A' level this is quite a simple process: student is given essay title - student writes essay (probably using designated text book), student hands in essay - for those of a criterion aptitude this does not educate them in anything but the use of a bic biro. (*sic*) On the other hand the GNVQ will give you a set of performance criteria on which the assessment must be planned, researched, written

¹¹ At this time GNVQ Advanced was called "level 3".

and evaluated. A process that creates structure that sub-consciously forges an understanding of the subject matter." (Abbot, 1995. Emphasis in original)

We shall deal with issues of pedagogy in more detail below, but it is appropriate to comment briefly on Abbot's description of the teaching styles he encountered. There is surely no intrinsic reason why A-level should *necessarily* be taught in the way he described,¹² or for that matter why GNVQ teaching might be, perforce, stimulating and creative. Nevertheless, the phrase used by this student of forging "an understanding of the subject matter" is powerful and indicates a deeper thinking, a form of meta-cognition where all the elements of business problems are brought together and made sense of in a way that A-level attempts, but so often fails to do. This must have an impact upon values. Whilst, as we have seen, the A-level assessment objectives *should* encourage a more reflective approach, if they are translated in the classroom in a way that does not encourage deeper thinking, then it could be that GNVQ is more effective in suggesting a critique of business.

It is necessary to point out, however, that Abbot may be reflecting a changing set of values in himself, as he matured. By his own admission he was not one of the most dedicated and committed students when he entered the sixth form. Having completed the first year of his A-levels he was significantly older than the average GNVQ student when he re-started and probably more motivated as well. It could be, therefore, that the values and style of GNVQ were exactly 'congruent' with his when he followed that course and as a result he performed extremely well, earning a distinction and going on to university afterwards.

Through their assessment systems, both GCE and GNVQ recognise that as candidates proceed through the course of study they will improve their performance, just as TGAT recognised in National Curriculum assessment that most students would attain higher levels as they grew older. As a chief examiner I was encouraged to set A-level examinations assuming the candidate to be an 'average' sixth form student; a somewhat slippery and esoteric concept, but one that explains why as a teacher, I observed adult part-time students achieving higher grades in economics and business with an apparently similar knowledge base. The difference between the two was life experience; as adults the part-timers had often experienced, or had knowledge of similar scenarios to the ones that were presented in case studies, and were able to

¹² Although the pressure of examinations and 'facts' often impacts upon classrooms in precisely this way. See Coles, 1997.

recognise and articulate the conditional nature of the business world in a way that eighteen year-olds found quite challenging.

6.4.6 Pedagogy

The methodology employed to achieve the course objectives tends to be less explicitly stated by official documents in A-levels than GNVQs.¹³ GCE examination boards and government bodies such as SCAA (now QCA) have never considered it their task to suggest, far less dictate what happens in classrooms, although an indirect influence has always been apparent in that the style of the final examination inevitably sets the tone of the pedagogy employed (Gipps, 1994: 34-40).

In terms of official documentation, the UCLES A-level modular framework states that:

"The module should be taught using case studies which emphasise the integrated nature of business studies." (*op. cit.*: 14)

GNVQs offer more detailed suggestions on teaching approaches, with a section in the specifications entitled "Guidance". This indicates ways of approaching an assignment relevant to the Element including: "The 'recorded discussion' may be recorded in writing, using an audio cassette, or on video." (NCVQ, 1995a: 21); and "Teachers and tutors should give students data to produce a twelve-month capital budget, trading forecast and cash flow forecast for a small business" (*ibid.*: 49).

In an earlier specification document, the direction was if anything, even more explicit:

"Centres and candidates are encouraged to use the unit specifications as an assessment framework and to be imaginative in their learning programmes, engaging in such activities as business enterprise, work experience, work shadowing and business education partnerships. These activities should directly assist the candidate in producing evidence." (NCVQ, 1993a: 3)

and

"When planning activities to provide evidence for the vocational units, teachers and tutors need to give students opportunities to meet

¹³ This may simply be a function of the fact that GNVQs are relatively new.

the grading criteria. The grading criteria reward independent action, and students need to learn early on in their GNVQ programme how to work *independently*. If they are always given instructions on how to go about their work, and are told all the information they need to complete assignments, they are denied the opportunity to achieve grades of merit or distinction." (NCVQ, 1994: 11)

This was taken even further in suggesting how the entire culture of an educational establishment would need to be tuned in to the new requirements:

"The new framework of 14 GNVQs offers considerable scope for curriculum managers to plan many interesting new courses. However, the choices available in the flexible GNVQ framework require the operational support of senior managers, tutors, well-informed career officers, counsellors, and others in schools, colleges and career offices. Young people and adults need good information and advice to make the best decisions about courses and progression." (NCVQ, 1993b:14)

All of the above would apply equally to GCEs, but it is important to note that it was quite explicit and thus quite different from the traditional A-level approach, which specified the final destination but not the way of reaching it. It exemplified the philosophical difference between the *process* of arriving at evidenced outcomes (GNVQ) and the *product* of a final examination to demonstrate the use of those skills in an unfamiliar context (GCE).

In collecting data for the SAGE project (ICRA, 1995), I was struck by an apparent contradiction. Despite the difficulties of the assessment regime, the often large teaching groups and the pressure on resources, many teachers remained enthusiastic advocates for GNVQ. I therefore carried out a small-scale survey amongst those schools and colleges that had taken part in the SAGE work in order to research certain aspects of GNVQ. Two hundred questionnaires were sent out and twenty six (a thirteen per cent response) were completed and returned. Such a small sample necessarily restricts the value of the data collected, but some of the responses revealed a consistency that was later confirmed by other researchers (Coles, 1997).¹⁴

¹⁴ Coles undertook data collection between April 1995 and December 1996 Coles (Coles, 1997). He collected data on teaching and learning in GNVQs from 350 students and 60 course directors and teachers delivering 29 courses in 24 centres across the United Kingdom.

I was interested in discovering if there was any pressure to combine A-level and GNVQ groups, or any desire to do so. I felt it was important to discover if teachers, or school managers felt that the two courses were so close in terms of content, philosophy or structure that they could be combined. Only two centres had done so, but four were under pressure from their Senior Management Teams, who had quoted time-tabling restrictions (1), lack of money (2), and staffing (1) as reasons for investigating the possibility. In that regard, ten of the respondents believed it would be feasible to combine groups, whilst ten did not. The evidence was therefore somewhat inconclusive, but it suggested that any bringing together of the two courses would be for pragmatic rather than 'purely' educational reasons, such as to encourage "parity of esteem" or to offer a similar set of values to the pupils.

In answer to the question "Are there aspects of GNVQ teaching which you think could improve A-level teaching?" a number of comments were repeatedly made. They were: more use of independent learning, key skills, and planning. The next question: "Are there aspects of A-level or GCSE teaching which you would like to carry over into GNVQ teaching?" Again there was consistency with "academic rigour" being mentioned in various guises by most respondents, although it was not clear what precisely such a phrase meant.

In terms of teaching GNVQ ("How differently do you or your colleagues feel that you *teach* GNVQ [as opposed to assess them] compared to other courses?") mention was made of "a more relaxed atmosphere", GNVQs being "more flexible", "student centred", creating "good staff-student relationships", the task being "not so much to teach as guide" and so on, suggesting a quite different style than in many conventional subject classrooms and confirming Abbot's judgement (see above).

Nevertheless, as the *National Survey Report* (FEDA, 1994: 27-29) found, there is a wide range of teaching times set aside for GNVQ, ranging from five to twenty five hours per week, with a modal value of eight. There is also a considerable difference between the number of teaching and timetabled hours, although this has to be treated with caution since "some centres will expect their students to undertake a certain amount of private study each week in their own time without specifying when this should be, in others it appears explicitly on the timetable." (*ibid.*: 28). This variability will have an effect on the teaching and learning that goes on and shows that despite the GNVQ Advanced award being "worth" twice an A-level, in practice it does not necessarily attract twice the teaching time.

There are clearly different teaching and learning styles employed at A-level as opposed to GNVQ (ICRA, 1995; FEDA 1994, 1997; Capey 1995). As well as *reflecting* different values bases, another critical question is the extent to which this impacts upon the values that the two impart. GNVQ is essentially formative, given that assignments build towards a portfolio that develops over the two years. The nature of the student/teacher relationship is in some ways closer than in a conventional A-level class, partly because the assessment regime requires that each individual's work has to be assessed, perhaps more than once as the student matures, and partly because the assignments are themselves investigative. On the other hand, the relative lack of whole-class teacher directed (or inspired) discussion is more limiting. It is often in those sessions that questions of values arise. An A-level class discussing marketing will almost certainly touch on the ethics of advertising. A GNVQ class, working separately as individuals might each write several lines of notes on the legal controls on advertising, but the two are not the same. The latter lacks the spontaneity that a dynamic whole-class discussion can generate in the best classrooms, where opinions can be expressed, tested and challenged, not only by the teacher but also by peers. Of course it would be wrong to stereotype all A-level or all GNVQ classes in this way because the influence of the school, the department and the teacher are crucial, as we saw with Paul Abbot's experiences. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the structure and philosophy of any course tends to lay down the parameters that will encourage one teaching style or another and that in turn will effect the outcome (Gipps, 1994).

6.4.7 Modularity and Values

GNVQs are arranged in Units, but assessed through elements.¹⁵ Given the way GNVQ documents are written, and the fact that GNVQs are relatively new, the majority of teaching is undertaken unit by unit (GARP, 1994). It is clear that this was not necessarily the intention, however:

"Although units are specified independently, learning activities will frequently produce evidence which can be assessed against the specifications of more than one unit. The units do not have to be covered in any particular sequence. For example, much of the learning required for the Advanced units Human Resources, Financial Resources and Marketing will be essential to the learning

¹⁵ This has been a major cause of discontent because of the burden of assessment which it imposes (Capey, 1995: 24). The Capey report recommended assessment by unit, and this has been adopted for introduction in the year 2000.

necessary for Business Planning; consequently Business Planning is placed at the end of the list of units but evidence towards it may well be produced through achievement in other units." (NCVQ, 1993a: 3)

and

"the units do not have to be covered in any particular sequence."

(RSA, 1993: 3)

In the latest specification available (1995), individual Units offer advice over ordering and assessing, with a tacit acceptance of some notion of the developing young person. For example, *Unit 1: Business in the Economy* states:

"While some staff prefer to plan courses which start with a study of the basic economic principles, students often find these concepts easier to understand and apply once they have achieved knowledge of other aspects of business. If students have little previous knowledge and understanding, the course could be designed so that assessment for Unit 1 occurs after some other units have been achieved." (NCVQ, 1995a: 18)

In this context there is one quotation which has particular resonance for GCE A-level Business Studies:

"The elements, performance criteria and range statements for each GNVQ unit specify in detail the knowledge, skills and understanding which students need to demonstrate. All students have to meet the requirements for all of the units before they gain a GNVQ certificate. *This means that GNVQs are unlike other qualifications: students must show they know about and understand the whole of the GNVQ course, not just parts of it.*" (NCVQ, 1994: 6. Emphasis added)

However, inspection evidence disputes the holistic awareness acquired by GNVQ students (OFSTED, annual reports 1993 to 1997). It is felt that the lack of synoptic testing brings into question their knowledge base, whilst to Linda Thomas it is the external testing regime itself with its "...multiple choice testing of decontextualised, meaningless, factual information and propositions", which is at fault (Thomas, 1996: 5). Proposals for future changes take both these views into account, with the introduction of synoptic tests using a variety of testing instruments, which bring them

much more closely in line with A-levels. A further problem with the unit by unit design of GNVQ is that for the full award the student has to cover a wide range of assessment tasks in each of their assignments, each one of which is, by definition, a sub-set of the whole. Finally, the structure of GNVQs in this form does not fit well with Dearing's (Dearing, 1996: 71; DFEE, 1997: 14) proposal to offer modules in different pathways and thus encourage candidates to move from one to another. As Capey puts it:

"The review group also considered the number of units in the full award in response to proposals in the Dearing review¹⁶....The review group is committed to the integrity of the GNVQ in its present unit structure. It also recognises the need for wider access to vocational qualifications which were raised in the Dearing review. It therefore recommends that:

(5) NCVQ investigate the possibility of identifying groups of units as a coherent sub-set of the Advanced GNVQ award for separate assessment and certification." (Capey, 1995: 24)

The notion of GNVQs as groups of units that will confer coherence draws an interesting parallel with modularity at A-level, where there is I believe, a trade-off between flexibility and a coherent, overarching view of the subject. From the first A-level Business Studies GCE syllabus (see appendix one) and the Nuffield Project (chapter five), comes the idea of an holistic approach to business rather than study of its constituent parts: marketing, accounts, economics and so on (Miller, 1996: 95). Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the first A-level Business Studies syllabus, UCLES' 9730,¹⁷ which contains a diagram depicting a decision-making framework that emphasises the integrated nature of the subject. Furthermore, the requirement on candidates who study this syllabus to write-up a "Practical Project" based around a period observing and working within a business organisation strengthens this point, since one of the assessment criteria is "the depth and breadth of the analysis" (UCLES, 1996: 11). This generally means that all aspects of the organisation's operations will have to be examined in some way or other, depending on the project title chosen.

The argument for the holistic view of business is straightforward and directly related to the values which are believed to be imparted; it is as follows. No business or

¹⁶ Capey had access to Dearing's Interim Report (Dearing, 1995), but in an interesting, almost dialectic way, his response then fed into Dearing's Final Report (Dearing, 1996)

¹⁷ Known as the 'linear', to distinguish it from 9514 - the modular syllabus.

businessperson can survive with *only* a knowledge of marketing or production or accounting, although individuals may be specialists in one or more of these, because knowledge in one must necessarily be mediated by the effects of the others. Thus, a student of business studies needs to recognise that increasing profits, if that is the firm's objective, may be achieved through an advertising campaign but may also come about, at less risk, through cost cutting. Knowledge of marketing is thus modified by constraints imposed by demand and supply elasticities, finance, production and so on.

This argument brings into question whether a student following the UCLES Modular syllabus 9514 will appreciate the totality of the subject in the same way as one following the original linear syllabus. Although the former has a so-called Double Module (0961) designed to cover all aspects of business activities, it is simply "....intended to provide a sound introduction on which further study in the option modules may be based" (UCLES, 1996: 14). In practice, 0961, because it comes first in the teaching scheme when students are just embarking on their A-level work, is often dealt with rather superficially, especially since it is also required to carry the burden of "two main themes, the use of information technology and change" (UCLES, 1996: 14).

In fact the UCLES modules are relatively prescriptive in terms of timing, with the compulsory Double Module, Business Environment 0961 being "followed by module 0962 the Research Assignment", which completes the course for an AS award (UCLES: 13). The intention is to encourage a systematic study that promotes the holistic view, but there remains some doubt as to whether the candidate following 9514 will end the course with the same, broad, evaluative view of business as one studying 9730, in the same way as doubts have been expressed about the totality of the GNVQ experience. Nevertheless, by devising the scheme in this way, flexibility has been achieved. In the case of UCLES it means that students can combine a modular business studies syllabus with one in economics and thus enable the examination board to compete with the Nuffield syllabus offered by EDEXCEL, whilst the modular nature of GNVQ will, in theory at least, allow students to shift from one pathway to another should they so wish.

In this thesis, which has set out to interrogate such matters using values and the maturing learner as key constructs, the danger for certain modes of curriculum development is clear. What the analysis in this section has shown is that the more fragmented the course, the less likely it is to offer a coherence that will enable deeper thinking and a questioning of underlying values and assumptions. For curriculum developers this is an issue not easily resolved. But at the very least decisions ought

not to be taken without reference to the interaction of values and the developing young person within the curriculum, that is 'congruence', for what we decide as a society to 'pass on' will be affected as much by the structure of the curriculum as its content. In this context that will mean a deeper examination of the impact of modularisation than simply justifying it on the basis of 'flexibility'.

6.4.8 Subject Content and Values.

At this point it is appropriate to take a comparative look at the specifics of the subject content in A-level Business Studies and GNVQ Business. However, comparing content specifications is potentially misleading because the philosophical differences between GNVQ and GCE is most clearly manifested by the lack of syllabuses in the one as opposed to the centrality of syllabuses in the other. Also A-levels possess specified "subject cores" that do not apply to GNVQs; they are "worth" half as much and in theory attract half the amount of teaching time (FEDA, 1997).

In undertaking an analysis of GNVQ business versus UCLES modular, one or other has to be the base. Since the order in which the modules are taught is to a degree determined by the examination board's regulations and is therefore related to maturity, it seems reasonable for the UCLES syllabus to provide the baseline. It should be noted, however that not all the modules are compulsory.

Another difficulty is that merely identifying what might crudely be termed a 'chunk' of content is not enough for deeper analysis. For instance, it may be possible to identify a subject area as common to both GCE and GNVQ, but if one asks candidates merely to "describe" whilst the other asks them to "evaluate", the outcomes provide entirely different value bases. The subject is being used for different purposes and, in the context of this thesis, the selection of content has been influenced by different notions of maturity or 'readiness' of the students, as well as different interpretations of the 'congruence' of values between subject matters to be taught and the students themselves.

The crucial point, however, and one that will be expanded later is that over time GNVQ content and A-level have drawn closer and closer. Using the *pre*-1995 GNVQ Advanced Business specification and the UCLES Double Module, the areas which are not covered by GNVQ are shown in the right hand column.

UCLES Business Environment Double Module 0961	RELATED GNVQ Unit	NOTES
1. Business and the environment in which it operates	1.1/1.3 Elements of Unit 5 4.2 (for 1d)	1c Nature of business not covered except ownership in 4.2
2. Objectives	5.1/8.1/1.3/1.2	2c conflict of state objectives not explicit
3. The Internal Organisation of a Business	2.1/4.2	
4. Information	1.2/6.1/3.1/3.2	4c is covered under core skills: Application of number & I.T. 4d is covered throughout GNVQ 4a Environment/Technology & Statistics not explicit in this context
5. The Human Resource	4.1/4.2/4.3	
6. Business Behaviour	4.1/4.2/4.3/7.1/7.2/6.3/7.4 /3.34.1/7.3	6d on productive efficiency is not covered.

Table 6.2 A Comparison between UCLES syllabus 0961 and the pre-1995 GNVQ Business Specification

The changes that took place in both the GNVQ specifications and the UCLES modular framework since 1995 mean that now only two areas are different. One is the *Conflict of Objectives* found in UCLES syllabus under *Objectives*. The second is *Productive Efficiency*, although this is dealt with in GNVQ through Element 5.1, which refers to the effective use of human resources and the promotion of effective production techniques.

Importantly, more philosophical areas, such as the environment, added value and ethical factors now figure within the GNVQ framework. The *Guidance* as well as the introductory sections at the beginning of each of the Units promote the notion that exploration by students can be deep as well as wide-ranging. Furthermore, if the

revised single award GNVQs in Business being piloted from September 1998 are adopted, a further step will be taken in this direction. Unit 1: Business at Work, the first of four compulsory modules finishes with the following statement:

"Culture.

All businesses have particular attitudes, values and beliefs which make up their culture. You need to be able to recognise the social, environmental and ethical influences which contribute to a business' culture, and explain the effects the culture has on the way the business works." (RSA, 1998b: 8)

Values have become quite explicit within GNVQ therefore, in a way that they were not earlier. We shall discuss this in more detail below. Nevertheless, it is clear that the gap between A-level Business Studies and GNVQ Business is closing. As Rob Taylor, Principal Officer of QCA puts it:

"At some stage, but not immediately, it will require debate about, for example, whether there is a place in the national framework for A levels and advanced GNVQ in similar subjects and vocational areas. For the immediate future, however, A levels and advanced GNVQs in areas such as business, media, art & design and science will co-exist." (Taylor, 1998: 3)

However, given the desire to rationalise syllabuses and to create a more consistent post-16 qualifications framework, as well as the need to reduce costs, it is possible that the days of co-existence are numbered. The point is, however, that curriculum development and change need to operate at a deeper level than expediency, or some notion of "a national framework", a phrase that might suggest a desire for neatness rather than curriculum thoughtfulness. What has to be recognised is that if one course disappears, then what gets 'passed on' in terms of societal values will change. Were A-level Business Studies to be replaced by the current GNVQ, then the values base of those studying business would be different; the holistic perspective might well be lost. The ability of A-level Business Studies students to question the underlying purposes, expectations and values of business in the everyday world that surrounds them would be much reduced because, as I have shown, GNVQ Business was not designed with that purpose in mind. That said, as we shall see in the next section, GNVQ Business has changed and continues so to do in a direction that I applaud, for it is now much more a critique than it was; in other words it is more like the A-level.

But if it is true that GNVQ Business is increasingly like A-level Business Studies, is this not another reason for having one course rather than two? That may be, but it also offers the A-level an opportunity to develop itself further. Historically, as we saw in earlier chapters and can be observed in appendix two, business studies has had to struggle to establish and maintain its academic credibility (Barnes, 1993: 41). It has also not been strong in developing students' thinking skills (chapter eight). As GNVQ Business moves into areas previously 'occupied' by the A-level, so the A-level has the chance to re-position itself and make the structured and disciplined discussion of values central.¹⁸ This I believe, would not only confirm its academic credentials, it would also make it more in line with the thinking of young people at their stage of maturity and so, by being more 'congruent', enable it to play an increasingly important role in the curriculum.

6.5 The Future of GNVQ

It is possible to discern a pattern in the development of GNVQs from their inception in the 1991 White Paper to the proposals that are currently being piloted for introduction in the year 2000. As discussed above, the context in 1991 was one of rising participation post-16, to levels approaching those of the country's main competitors. This meant that it was necessary to offer qualifications to match the needs of a new cohort of students, either by expanding the existing provision of A-levels and NVQs or by introducing a new qualification.

In the event A-level numbers did, and continue to expand, but despite this growth, the qualification continues to be seen as the "Gold Standard", a name coined following the rejection of the Higginson Committee's recommendations in 1988 (DES, 1988). NVQs, on the other hand, are seen as complex to administer, not well understood by candidates and user-groups and in the opinion of some, fail to achieve their primary objective of raising competence (Smithers, 1993; Wolf, 1995a; FEDA, 1997). In addition, NVQs are not designed to offer any form of general education, and yet the growing popularity of "'traditional' vocational and semi-vocational awards" (FEDA, 1997: 12) such as BTEC diplomas, indicates that a market for such qualifications exists.

Certainly the language used in the 1991 White Paper, the objectives set for GNVQs, and the fact that they were put under the control of the National Council for

¹⁸ By structured and disciplined I mean the application of *thinking skills* that are discussed in more detail in chapter eight.

Vocational Qualifications and the day-to-day leadership of Gilbert Jessup, a confirmed believer in competence-based assessment, all indicate that the new qualifications were seen then as broadly vocational, with some general education as a support. This tends to confirm Hodgson and Spours argument (*op. cit.*: 9, 20) that GNVQs were a distinct 'track' designed to "'retrench' the academic" one (*ibid.*: 9) by restricting A-level participation and encouraging it to move into GNVQs. At the same time, however, as Hodgson and Spours themselves agree, as well as creating three distinct 'tracks', the White Paper also created "a qualification framework (designed) to link the three tracks through a limited alignment of levels and unit design" (*ibid.*: 9). There appears to be a contradiction here (see footnote one in this chapter), namely the extent to which A-levels, GNVQs and NVQs are designed to be distinct and separate or whether there are 'bridges' that allow students to move from one 'track' to another.¹⁹ I would suggest that, even if it were true that they were designed as distinct tracks in 1991, the evidence is that, at least between A-levels and GNVQs, it is becoming less so.

Even by 1993 it was apparent that GNVQs would be adjusted to bring them more into line with A-levels:

"Although the model of GNVQs was derived from NVQs, there has been a conscious attempt to align them not only with NVQs in related occupational areas, but also with the National Curriculum and A/AS qualifications. Alignments apply both in standards set at a particular level, and in the content covered in common subjects or vocational areas. This is to establish clearer learning progression routes and coherence within the education and training system, and to facilitate progression to higher education from Advanced GNVQ." (NCVQ, 1993b: 7)

Certainly, as we saw above, the content of GNVQ Business and A-level Business Studies are drawing ever-closer and with proposed changes to the way GNVQs are assessed, the four criteria that Hodgson and Spours apply to distinctive 'tracks' namely purposes, content, assessment and structure all appear increasingly blurred. The movement of GNVQs towards A-levels is born out by research (GARP, 1994; FEDA, 1994, 1997; Capey 1995; OFSTED, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996; ICRA, 1995), of which perhaps the most indicative, partly because of the size and the length of the study, was that undertaken by Professor Wolf and her colleagues under the auspices of the

¹⁹ Hence my preference for the term 'pathway'.

Further Education Development Agency, the Nuffield Foundation and the Institute of Education, University of London (FEDA, 1994, 1997). However, even as this evidence was accumulating, GNVQs were being further modified, and this process continues. Not only is the business subject content being brought more closely together, the assessment regime is also changing. The introduction of an assignment which is centrally set indicates the need to improve reliability in line with other research findings (ICRA, 1995). Similarly, the original multiple-choice tests, which were designed to confirm underpinning knowledge and which were subject to much criticism for being poorly prepared and in many cases not valid in an assessment sense (Capey, 1995; Thomas, 1996; OFSTED), will be replaced under the latest proposals by papers lasting between two and four hours testing four of the eight mandatory units (RSA, 1998a).²⁰

Crucially, too, the underpinning of competence-based assessment is being abandoned. Under the latest proposals, performance criteria no longer appear, instead the unit structure will offer advice to students about what they need to learn, and what evidence they have to produce in order to achieve either a pass, merit or a distinction. In addition to the double award GNVQ consisting of eight mandatory units and four optional units, a single award GNVQ will be available consisting of six units, which will allow it to fit into an expanded A/AS framework, with the intention of encouraging students to move across from one qualification to the other. Also, key skills, once the sole domain of GNVQ, are planned to be included in all Advanced study, but because of difficulties in assessment, applicability to certain subject areas and the challenge of appropriateness in terms of level, they will no longer contribute to the final GNVQ award (RSA, 1998a).

I would argue, therefore, that if one imagines the qualification framework as a continuum (see figure 6.2), with A-levels at one end and Vocational qualifications at the other, it is likely that in 1991 GNVQs would have been placed quite close to NVQs. Over the intervening period there has been a movement towards other end.

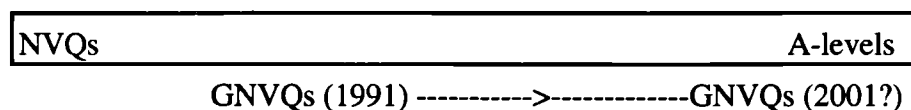


Fig. 6.2 A continuum of qualifications

²⁰ They will also take place on two testing occasion in the year to bring them directly into line with A and AS levels.

The important question concerns the way these changes affect Business as a subject area. In 1998 the numbers following GNVQ Business increased by 7% over the previous year, whereas A-level Business Studies numbers rose by more than 10%. Indeed, across all areas there appears to be a "plateau effect", which Smithers believes is the result of a lack of a clear identity for GNVQs (quoted in Cassidy, 1998). There is no doubt that in 1991 it was possible to examine the action words used in GNVQ Business and A-level Business Studies and expect quite different outcomes. Where the GNVQ asked candidates to "describe", the A-level asked them to "analyse" or "evaluate".²¹ The GNVQ was more concerned with the process of data collection than the data itself. A *critique* of business was lacking in GNVQ whereas it figured strongly at A-level. Finally, despite the fact that GNVQs theoretically occupied twice the teaching space, there were critical areas of content that were missing, especially those of a more philosophical nature.

Taken together these factors produced an entirely different value base. *Describing* a business system indicates an acceptance of its *a priori* assumptions: the efficacy of the self-regulating market mechanism, profit maximisation as the key business objective, the role and even the existence of organised labour and so on. In contrast, A-level students were and are asked questions in their final examinations about such matters as the ethics of dumping high level toxic waste, the effects of the Bhopal and *Herald of Free Enterprise* tragedies, the role of trade unions in a changing business environment and so on.

Such *fundamentally* different positions no longer hold, although the assessment regimes will continue to encourage different outcomes. But perhaps that is as it should be. After all, different learning styles suit different individuals. Paul Abbot is an example of a student who was clearly motivated by GNVQ in a way that he was not with A-level. So long as the essential value position of business in society is subject to critical analysis, offering different routes to achieve such a critique must be advantageous in terms of values 'passed on'. Similarly, there is evidence that perceived good practice in the different teaching styles employed by GNVQ and A-level is percolating from one to the other and *vice versa*, a process that is likely to be beneficial to the increasing numbers of post-16 students who in the past would not have been a part of the educational system. Overall then, there is evidence of increasing convergence, but at the same time a curriculum choice still exists and one that, I contend, through the recognition of the developing young person, offers a better

²¹ Once again the latest proposals close this gap. Under "Assessment evidence" students are required to "evaluate sources of information....", "explain the strengths and weaknesses in the structure or culture of each organisation" and so on if they want to be awarded a Distinction. (RSA, 1998b: 10)

chance of 'congruence' for the wider student population that now continues to study beyond compulsory schooling. Students mature at different rates, even when they are the same chronological age; a course that emphasises one type of formative assessment will suit some better than others, whilst there will be another group whose preference will be for a course emphasising greater 'freedom' from assessment, but with a summative element at the end. The challenge is to encourage curriculum developers to recognise the importance of 'congruence' and accept that while GNVQ Business content, teaching, learning and assessment environments may be increasingly similar to A-level Business Studies, there is considerable benefit in allowing both to co-exist so as to allow as many students as possible the opportunity to analyse critically the business world surrounding them.

6.6 Conclusion

The chapter has argued that the changing context of post-compulsory education induced a response from government that resulted in a new set of qualifications, GNVQs. Like the 1988 National Curriculum they were hurriedly introduced and like BIS were something of an automatic reaction to a need. They were predicated on a competence model that implied particular and special values including, in the case of Business, certain assumptions about the market, the role of organised labour and the objectives of firms. At the same time the model also allowed for maturity, enabling GNVQ candidates to re-submit work until they were satisfied with the outcome. GNVQs were immediately successful in terms of the numbers of candidates who opted for them, but because of their shortcomings they have been the object of considerable criticism, to which they have progressively responded.

GNVQ Advanced Business, as the largest GNVQ and one of the first to be introduced, has faced a particular challenge because it confronted a direct and highly successful competitor in the A-level market. The distinction between GNVQ Business and A-level Business Studies was quite apparent in the early years, especially in their examination of the values of the business world, but this gap is closing and there is now relatively little to distinguish between the two, at least in terms of their specifications. Nevertheless, the two assessment regimes continue to provide differentiation in terms of outcome and this is likely to alter the values base of those pursuing either one.

As I argued above, offering a choice may be the right way forward, but the results in terms of the values 'passed on' will inevitably be different. The popularity of both A-

level Business Studies and GNVQ Business courses suggests that they are, by my definition, 'congruent'. That is to say the curriculum and its interaction between maturity and the values that students coming into the course possess, is *generally* right.²² However, 'congruence' is also about the dynamics of the curriculum, because we are interested in what gets 'passed on'. A course that continues to emphasise the workings of business, encourages students to research assignments on their own and is built around 'units' will result in different perspectives from one that is more reflective, teacher-directed and holistic. I would argue that the latter is preferable, though it has to be accepted that it will not suit all learners. My reasoning is as follows. As students mature, their life experiences *do* provide them with benchmarks against which they can test business activities, but these are crude and indiscriminate measures that depend on each individual processing the information in a particular way. Thinking skills and the ability to critique the world of business do not come instinctively, as we shall see in chapter eight. Students aged seventeen to nineteen, who are after all significant consumers already, need assistance in questioning their own value positions, those that business projects and the place and interaction of both. Such help should, I believe, be found in the formal curriculum, which is why I am arguing so vigorously for the inclusion of a business/economics dimension, but also for one that is quite specific - one that puts such questions at its heart. In the next chapter we shall be looking at a vocational qualification, training to enter the world of business as an accountant, to see whether in that arena these issues are developed and investigated to the extent that I am advocating.

6.7 References

- Abbot, P. (1995) *Text of Speech Delivered to a group of Norwegian Teachers*, Norway House, London. Nov. 18.
- Ashworth, P., and Saxton, J. (1990) "On Competence" in *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 14, No. 2 Summer.
- Atkinson, A. (1996) "Assessing Diverse Elements in GNVQ" in Hodgkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Barnes, S. (1993) "A-level courses in Business Studies" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 1 No 1 Spring.

²² However, the experience of Paul Abbot as well as low levels of GNVQ retention suggest they are not always.

- Barnett, R. (1994) *The Limits of Competence*, Open University Press.
- Beeline: The Newsletter of the Economics and Business Education Association* No. 1, March 1997.
- Bloomer, M. (1998) "'They tell you what to do and then they let you get on with it': the illusion of progressivism in GNVQ" in *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 11, No. 2: 167-186.
- Capey, J. (1995) *GNVQ Assessment Review*, London: NCVQ.
- Cassidy, S. (1998) "GNVQs Start to run out of Steam" in *Times Educational Supplement*, Nov. 6: 6.
- Chambers, I. (1987) "CAL in Business Studies" in Hurd, S. J. (Ed.) *Computers in Economics and Business Education*, Heinemann Educational Books.
- Coles, M. (1997) *Methods and Effectiveness in GNVQ Teaching and Learning*, London: NCVQ.
- Dearing, R. (1996) *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds*, SCAA.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1988) *Advancing A-Levels, Report of the Committee Chaired by Professor Higginson*, London: HMSO.
- (DFEE) Department for Education and Employment (1997) *Qualifying for Success. A consultative Paper on the Future of Post-16 Qualifications*, DFEE Publications
- Dransfield, R. (Ed.) (1998) *GNVQ Today*, Issue 7 Summer. Hebdon Bridge: Peacock Press.
- Dransfield, R. (1998) "Griper" in Dransfield, R. (Ed.) *GNVQ Today*, Issue 7 Summer. Hebdon Bridge: Peacock Press.
- (FEDA) Further Education Development Agency, Institute of Education and The Nuffield Foundation (1994) *GNVQs 1993-97: A National Survey Report - Interim*, London: FEDA.

(FEDA) Further Education Development Agency, Institute of Education and The Nuffield Foundation (1997) *GNVQs 1993-97: A National Survey Report*, London: FEDA.

(FEFC) Further Education Funding Council 1994 *General National Vocational Qualifications in the Further Education Sector in England* Coventry: FEFC

(FEFC) Further Education Funding Council 1997 *Standards and their Assurance in Vocational Qualifications: National Survey Report* Coventry: FEFC

Finegold, D., Keep, E., Miliband, D., Raffe, D., Spours, K., and Young, M (1990) *A British Baccalaureate: Overcoming Divisions between Education and Training*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

(GARP) (1994) *GNVQ Assessment Review Project - A Technical Report published by the Employment department's Learning Methods Branch*, Report No. 23 July.

Gipps, C. (1994) *Beyond Testing*, London: Falmer Press.

Gipps, C., and Wood, R. (1981) "The Testing of Reading in LEAs. The Bullock Report 7 Years On" in *Educational Studies*, Vol. 7 No. 2.

Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) (1997) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.

Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (1997) "From the 1991 White Paper to the Dearing Report: A Conceptual and Historical Framework for the 1990s" in Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.

Hodkinson, P., and Mattinson, K. (1994) "A Bridge Too Far? The Problems Facing GNVQ" in *The Curriculum Journal*, Vol. 5 No. 3.

Hurd, S. J. (1986) "Survey of Computer Use in Economics and Business Studies" pp. 120-127 in *Economics*, Vol. XXII, Part 3, No. 95 Autumn.

Hurd, S. J. (1987) (Ed.) *Computers in Economics and Business Education*, Heinemann Educational Books.

- Hurd, S. J. (1990) "Report on the 1989 National Survey of Computer Use in Economics and Business Studies" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVI, Part 3, No. 111, Autumn 134-140.
- Hurd, S. J. (1995) "Third National Survey of Computer Use in Economics and Business Education 1995" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 3: No. 4, Winter.
- (ICRA) International Centre for Research on Assessment, Institute of Education and the Centre for Curriculum and Assessment Studies, University of Bristol (1995) *Evaluation of the Use of Set Assignments in GNVQ (SAGE Project)*, Manpower Services Commission.
- Jessup, G. (1991) *Outcomes: NVQs and the Emerging Model of Education and Training*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Marshall, K. (1991) "NVQs: An Assessment of the 'Outcomes' Approach to Education and Training" in *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Autumn.
- Midgley, S. (1997) "Choice Threatened as the future of A-level hangs in the balance" in *TES Extra*, April 4: I.
- Miller, J (1996) "Strengths and Weaknesses of Modular A-levels" in Dearing, R. *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds: Appendices*, SCAA.
- (NCVQ) National Council for Vocational Qualifications, (1993a) *GNVQ Mandatory Units for Business*, London: NCVQ.
- (NCVQ) National Council for Vocational Qualifications, (1993b) *GNVQ Information Note*, London: NCVQ.
- (NCVQ) National Council for Vocational Qualifications. (1994) *Grading Advanced GNVQs*, London: NCVQ.
- (NCVQ) National Council for Vocational Qualifications. (1995a) *GNVQ Mandatory Units for Business*, London: NCVQ.

(NCVQ) National Council for Vocational Qualifications. (1995b) *NVQ Criteria and Guidance*, London: NCVQ.

(OFSTED) Office for Standards in Education. (Annual reports, 1993 - 96.) *GNVQs in Schools: Quality and Standards of General National Vocational Qualifications*, London: HMSO.

Pollard, A., Broadfoot, P., Goll, P., Osborne, M and Abbot, D. (1994) *Changing English Primary Schools? The Impact of the Educational Reform Act at Key Stage One*, London: Cassell.

Popham, W. J. (1984) "Specifying the domain of content or behaviours" in Berk, R. A. (Ed.) *A Guide to Criterion-Referenced Test Construction*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Raffe, D. (1992) *Participation of 16-18 Year-olds in Education and Training*, NCE Briefing Paper No. 3, National Commission on Education.

(RSA) Royal Society of Arts, (1993) *Business : Intermediate and Advanced GNVQs*, Coventry: RSA

(RSA) Royal Society of Arts. (1998a) *GNVQ and Key Skills Update*. Conference held at the Barbican Hotel, London 18 June.

(RSA) Royal Society of Arts. (1998b) *Advanced GNVQ Single Award. Business. Scheme Booklet. Pilot September 1998*, May.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1994) *GCE Subject Cores for Business Studies*, London: SCAA.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1997) *GCE A/AS Subject Core for Business Studies*, London: SCAA.

Smithers, A. (1993) "All our Futures: Britain's Educational Revolution" *Dispatches*, Channel 4 Television.

Smithers, A. (1998) "Is there a better way than A?" in *Times Educational Supplement* 7th August. p. 9.

- Surridge, M (1994) *To what extent does the introduction of GNVQs represent a real change in education?* MA dissertation, University of East Anglia. Unpublished
- Taylor, R. (1998) "Qualifying for Success. A Consultation on the Future of Post-16 Qualifications" in Dransfield, R. (Ed.) *GNVQ Today*, Issue 7, Summer. Hebdon Bridge: Peacock Press.
- Thomas, L. (1996) "Business Education into Working Life - Beyond Competence" in *Economic Awareness*, Vol. 8, No. 1.
- Tribe, J. (1994) "Core Skills and A/AS Economics: Some Survey Findings" in *Economic and Business Education*, Vol. 2, Part 2, No. 6 Summer pp. 84-86.
- (UCLES) University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (Undated) *AS and A level Business Subjects: Examination Syllabuses for 1996*, Cambridge, UCLES.
- Ward, L. (1996) "Employers Prefer Academic Study" in *Times Educational Supplement* 8th March.
- White Paper (1991) *Education and Training for the 21st Century*, London: HMSO.
- Wolf, A. (1995a) *Competence-based Assessment*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Wolf, A. (1995b) *An Assessment-Driven System: Education and Training in England and Wales*, ICRA Research Monographs No. 3, London: ULIE.
- Wolf, A., 1996 *The Tyranny of Numbers* London: ULIE
- Wolf, A., Burgess, R., Stott, H., and Veasey, J. (1994) *GNVQ Assessment Review Project: Final Report*, Technical Report No. 23, R. and D. Series, Employment Department Learning Methods Branch.
- Wolf, A., and Silver, R. (1986) *Work-Based Learning: Trainee Assessment by Supervisors*, Sheffield: MSC, R. and D. Series, No. 33.
- Young, M, (1997) "The Dearing Review of 16-19 Qualifications: A step Towards a Unified System?" in Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.

Young, M., and Leney , T. (1997) "From A-levels to an Advanced Level Curriculum for the Future" in Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.

CHAPTER 7

VALUES AND A VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION: BECOMING A CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

7.1 Introduction

Arguments being advanced so far in this thesis have concentrated on mainstream educational initiatives. In chapter six GNVQ was identified as a third 'pathway' between academic and vocational qualifications, but as we saw it has enjoyed only limited success in achieving that aim.

We now turn to a vocational business qualification - that of becoming a Chartered Accountant. This qualification is gained by successfully completing a series of examinations set and marked by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW).¹ The ICAEW is a fairly typical 'industry lead body' as understood in the English vocational qualification system. That means it largely sits outside a legislative framework, that it jealously guards its independence and has little connection with the academic world (Geddes, 1995). The ICAEW is coming under increasing pressure from other accountancy qualifications, suggesting I shall argue, that its curriculum is losing its relevance to, and connections with the values of the profession and the wider business community, especially since it almost totally disregards the maturity of the trainees, at least in terms of their prior learning and achievements. This indicates that the curriculum is, in the term used throughout this thesis, no longer 'congruent'. The ICAEW is responding to the competition from other accounting bodies, but as far as the national qualifications framework is concerned it remains apart, and some might also argue, aloof.

This chapter is important to this thesis because accountancy, and its training, demonstrates a diverging values base, brought about by the changing needs of business and the profession itself. To an extent the values that underpins the ICAEW system are unstated, but nevertheless they exist, reflecting the expected role of accountants in society. Certainly the primary research undertaken here supports the view that part of the point of the examinations is a socialisation process into this

¹ Responsibility for setting and marking "Conversion" papers that some aspiring accountants have to pass before moving on to the ICAEW set papers - Intermediate and Final - has been devolved to Tutors by the ICAEW. Tutors are firms which are responsible for the pedagogical aspects of the training process.

values system, as much as it is a test of relevant practical knowledge acquisition (see also, Geddes, 1995: 29). This argument is reinforced by the fact that only employees of member firms can sit ICAEW examinations, and so barriers relating to class, race or sex may exist behind the formal credentials.

Training to become a Chartered Accountant is interesting and revealing from the perspective of someone such as myself steeped in the educational 'mainstream'. Indeed it was in undertaking the research for this chapter that I was struck by the importance of developing maturity as an element in what I now term the 'congruent curriculum'. Then I took maturity at a rather simplistic level to mean a recognition of prior learning and achievement within the formal curriculum; after all the trainees were adults and therefore considered both by age and certainly in legal terms, fully 'mature'. I noted that within the training they received, even this form of development was almost totally ignored, other than by a limited acceptance that prior learning allowed exemption from some parts of the examination. It was unsurprising therefore that a more sophisticated notion of maturity, which recognises changing values, expectations and perhaps even psychological states was also disregarded. Largely because of this, as well as for other reasons, the pedagogy and assessment in the training of chartered accountants encourages both didactic teaching and rote learning, which sit at odds with the experience of the majority of trainees who enter the profession having just completed their state education. Hence my contention that the curriculum for trainee chartered accountants is not 'congruent'.

7.2 Vocational education and training in England and Wales: self-help in action

One of the more interesting aspects of English society is its somewhat ambiguous attitude towards vocational qualifications. On the one hand there is the low regard in which they are generally held, which Wolf calls "....the old English prejudice that there are only two tracks: academic and other" (1995b: 12). On the other hand, and apparently without any sense of contradiction or irony, vocational qualifications are seen as the only valid entry to the best-paid and arguably most prestigious professions: medicine, law and accountancy (Smithers, 1998). To a large extent this situation is historical, but may also reflect one aspect of the English class system: the working class went into manufacturing, the more skilled amongst them following apprenticeships because they could not afford or were otherwise not able to stay on at school, whilst the upper or upper middle class went into the professions which required lengthy period of indenture with no, or poor or even negative financial

reward.² The remainder, blessed perhaps with more intelligence or financial resources than the working class but insufficient cash to cover the financial investment required by the professions competed as best they could, by acquiring general academic qualifications. They were supported in this endeavour by a powerful, articulate university elite that looked down on vocationalism in almost all of its forms. As Geddes puts it in a sentence with particular resonance to this thesis:

"The view that accountancy, along with business studies, was not respectable....prevailed until at least the 1970s and can still be evidenced; not least by the fact that one cannot read for an accounting degree at the country's two most prestigious universities."

(Geddes, 1995: 19)

Progressively, and increasingly up to the 1980s, the number of industrial apprenticeships available to school leavers diminished. There were a number of reasons for this. Perhaps the most important was that they were largely based in traditional, 'heavy' industries that were in serious, some even terminal decline. This not only meant a limited number of training opportunities, but also indicated that, even after serving a long period on poor wages, once qualified there would be no guarantee of a lifetime's employment. There were other factors at work as well: growing industries that tended to be in the service sector where flexibility was the key; the nascent information revolution that required different skills, often, as Bill Gates of Microsoft showed, skills unrelated to age or experience; high wage settlements in the 1970s and 1980s that discouraged employers from taking on apprentices, and finally, periods of recession brought about by restructuring, as well as a determination to break the cost-push, demand-pull inflationary spiral that together resulted in heavy youth unemployment and a lack of training opportunities (Wolf, 1995a: 11-12).

The changing model of apprenticeships was also reflected in "the myriad self regulating awarding bodies" (*ibid.*: 14) that had evolved over the years without any significant government control or regulation. Indeed, it was not until the 1964 Industrial Training Act that any attempt was made to do so, and even this attempt was criticised for being too restricted and bureaucratic (DoE, 1972). The underlying principle for training appeared to be what Unwin calls "voluntarism and self-help", which she argues, continues to this day in the form of "school teachers, college and

² In the 1930s an articulated accountant had to pay between 100 and 300 guineas per year for each of the five years of *his* apprenticeship. The first woman member of ICAEW qualified in 1924 (Geddes, 1995: 89).

university lecturers....seeking professional development courses via distance and open learning modes" (Unwin, 1997: 77) because training is not considered to be a part of their job specification.

As a result of a review of vocational qualifications, in 1986 the government established the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) with a remit to establish a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) system. Unfortunately NVQs have been subject to intense criticism, partly, as we saw in the last chapter, because of their reliance on a competence model (*inter alia* Beaumont, 1995; Hyland, 1994), and partly because the industry lead bodies that established the standards tended to be a "....rather small group, well known to each other and the key Government officials" which "strengthened the tendency....to generate a private vocabulary and conventions which were opaque or incomprehensible to outsiders" (Wolf, 1995a: 16). These factors in turn led either to their rejection by employers (Robinson, 1996) or their use simply as a confirmation of tasks already done in the workplace (Wolf, 1995a).

Nevertheless, NVQs are an attempt at both standardisation and equivalence and there are signs that governments are taking the notion of parity of esteem seriously. This is shown by the merging of separate Departments previously concerned only with employment or education to form the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the creation of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) from SCAA and NCVQ.

It is perhaps unsurprising that governments have been slow to accept responsibility for vocational education. The business community, as powerful advocates of the market mechanism, generally prefers non-regulation to legislative control, and within that context regards training as its responsibility. It is sometimes suggested that this is so that the cost of training can be mediated depending on trading conditions, but there is also a belief that only those who are intimately involved with a particular job can possibly know what is competent and what is not. This belief extends to the professions, although they have other motivating factors. For them, setting vocational standards, amongst other things, is an important way of maintaining a barrier to entry, with all that that implies for professionalisation (and salary levels), as well as being a method of ensuring that relevant skills are acquired (Geddes, 1995).

7.3 The Route to Qualification

With the possible exception of an MBA, qualifying as a *Chartered Accountant*, confers on the holder *the* premier business qualifications (ICAEW, 1993, 1996). This is a fairly recent phenomenon, however. Geddes (1995) shows how accounting struggled with notions of professionalisation, and that as late as the 1960s it was still predominantly a career for school leavers at 16+ ; indeed O-level entry was not abolished until 1973. At the other end of the academic spectrum, the percentage of graduates entering was static at 8% for 30 years until it began to rise in 1965; today the figure is close to 100% (*ibid.*, 1995: 266).

Having joined a firm, a trainee Chartered Accountant receives practical training 'on-the-job'. If the organisation is big enough this will be under the tutelage of a specified training partner; if it is small a partner will assign some of his or her time to the task. Qualification is only earned, however, by passing a series of examinations. All entrants have to go through what is termed 'Foundation Education'. This means passing either a 'Test of Accounting Competence' if the trainee has a 'relevant' degree (such as accounting or economics), or a 'Conversion' paper if the degree is 'non relevant'. The Conversion examination is set and marked by 'Tutors'. Tutors are firms who teach trainees, generally in periods of block release from the accounting firms themselves. The expense for this training invariably rests with the accounting firms and not the trainees. Lecturers in Tutoring firm are not trained teachers; they are almost exclusively Chartered Accountants. Once the trainee has passed Foundation he or she will move on to 'Intermediate' and then 'Final' examinations, which consist of a variety of papers in different subject areas. Intermediate examinations tend to cover the more technical subjects whereas Finals are increasingly generic, concentrating more on business skills.

7.4 Becoming a Chartered Accountant in England and Wales: An historical perspective on the dominant values

7.4.1 From 1880 to 1945

Prior to the Second World War (and indeed for some time after it), entry to the profession was largely controlled by the simple expediency of expense: becoming articulated was both costly and time consuming. But as today there was also the hurdle of the exams set by the relevant accounting bodies. Of these, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) was, and remains the most

prestigious. Partly this is because it is the oldest, it was started in 1880, partly because it received charter status before the other bodies and partly because,

"....members of the ICAEW appear to enjoy status advantages both in public perception and in the market place. Indicators of the advantage enjoyed by those with the ICAEW qualification can be found in industry and public practice. On moving into industry, the ACA (Associate member of the ICAEW) will often command a premium over those who are CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants) and ACCA (The Chartered Association of Certified Accountants) qualified. In public practice, much of the most important and lucrative work is in the hands of ICAEW member firms; for example, although members of the ACCA can be licensed to audit limited companies, it is ICAEW member firms which constitute the larger audit firms and who audit all the major UK quoted companies" (Geddes, 1995: 81. Parenthesis added.)

The examinations as hurdles have changed over time. Until 1945 Intermediate and Final were firmly based in the legal aspects of accounting and they were hard to pass - the average rate in the 1930s was 50%. Interestingly from a modern perspective and view of vocational training, the examination as a whole also contained a general education component. The *Preliminary Examinations*, the equivalent of Foundation today, consisted of English and Mathematics papers, plus three out of Geography, History, Latin, Greek, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Advanced Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Geology. This syllabus remained in force from 1882 to 1945 with only one change in 1921, when a paper entitled 'General Commercial Knowledge, including the principles and uses of Bookkeeping' was introduced.

Such consistency over more than sixty years is indicative not only of a remarkably stable business environment, but also of a particular set of values that is often the stereotypical view of the profession generally, that is to say conservative and change-resistant. One must remember, however, that it is part of an accountants training and professional responsibility to avoid risk; indeed the accounting principle of 'prudence'³ expresses this perfectly. Even if the trainee accountant starts his or her career without such values, they become part of the socialisation process, though as

³ The principle of prudence states that profit is not anticipated and revenue is not recognised until its recognition is reasonable.

we shall see, societal and business changes are challenging that perception, which is why I argue, the profession is going through such difficulties as it is at present.

7.4.2 From 1945 to 1980

The period from 1945 until 1965 continued to bring little change in the ICAEW and as a result of this failure to move with the times there was increasing competition from other accounting bodies, which began to take significant market share from the Institute. It was significant, nevertheless, that when a government report by Carr-Saunders (1949) suggested that accountancy education should take place in technical and commercial colleges, the ICAEW took the lead in resisting this attempt to involve the public sector; a policy that continues to this day⁴ (Geddes, 1995: 138-9, 165).

As the ICAEW began to respond to market pressures through the 1970s, and as a means of promoting its members' interests in terms of professionalism, it introduced a series of modifications to the examination structure, which resulted in pass rates falling to an average of 25% between 1975 and 1981 (*ibid.*: 156). This fall was partly explained by the move towards an all graduate-entry, but the opaqueness of the examination system did not help.

One significant development during the 1970s was the switch from correspondence courses to specialised firms offering block release, the Tutors. These were (and to some extent still are) resented both by the ICAEW and by the accounting firms because of the costs both financial and opportunity, involved in releasing trainees. So, for instance, in the early days the Tutors were not supplied with syllabuses or reading lists. As late as 1981 no model answers were offered to exam questions, and even today as we shall see later in the chapter, communication with examiners is not consistently good. Such resentment indicates a confused values position, which centres around what I term 'inclusivity', that is to say the extent to which the examination system is designed to accept trainees into the profession or reject them. A straightforward competence model, as we saw in chapter six, should be inclusive: if you display competence you *must* pass. For accountants, allowing large numbers to enter the profession signals a clear danger both to status and salary levels, which is one of the reasons for having the examinations as a hurdle as well as offering practical

⁴ On the 14 March 1997 The *Financial Times* (Wighton and Kelly, 1997) reported that Coopers and Lybrand, one of the major accountancy firms were considering revising their training so that it would qualify under the modern apprenticeship scheme and thus attract government funding. A Labour MP was reported as saying, "This is a flagrant abuse of the training system which appears to be using taxpayers' money to line the pockets of partners of well-heeled accountancy firms". This was perhaps an understandable reaction, but its prevention means that once again this aspect of vocational training remains outside a national framework.

training. The problem is that if a firm is paying a great deal to the Tutors, it expects its trainees to pass (and perhaps secretly hope that everyone else's do not). Such a confused value position is part of the disintegration of the profession that we shall explore later in greater depth, one that began in the period we are about to examine.

7.4.3 From 1980 to the present

The 1980s and 1990s were significant years for accounting, not least because of high rates of economic growth and financial deregulation (Henley, 1996: 17). Within the profession it was a period of rapid expansion and merger activity, so that by the late 1990s a handful of firms dominated the market and had themselves become multinational conglomerates. This was an important shift away from the time when there was a large number of quite small partnerships operating throughout the country. In addition, accountants were in greater demand in industry than ever before. Salaries grew rapidly in line with this expansion and the biggest firms were able to recruit large numbers of the best qualified graduates.

At the same time, the demands on the professional accountant were changing. The computer revolution played a part in this, but the image of the accountant as methodical numerical manipulator altered. Certainly within the general business community, but also inside the largest accounting firms, chartered accountants were required to use financial information in its broadest sense, to analyse it and make business judgements based on that information. This shift was reflected, in one example, when Arthur Andersen changed its name to Andersen Consulting and became a multinational financial organisation specialising in advising major corporations. As a corollary to these practical adjustments, the values base of accountancy and accountants was also altered. The image of the staid, ultra conservative partner operating in a small firm in a provincial town was replaced by the jet-setting businessperson wearing expensive clothes and driving fast cars. In both cases the interests of the client would come first, but when one is the local butcher and the other a multinational conglomerate, it is easy to recognise different pressures to do the 'right' thing.

7.5 Fragmentation: the dichotomy of values

Although it can be argued that accountancy has never before been as well respected, and its members never as well paid as they are in the 1990s, the profession and specifically the ICAEW, face particular problems. First, the industry is increasingly

fragmented. It is dominated by a few very large firms who recruit the best graduates and train the largest numbers. In 1984, out of a total of 5171, 1419 (27%) were trained by small firms and 2451 (47%) by large ones. By 1995 the figures were 735 out of a total of 3936 (19%) in small firms and 2368 (60%) in large ones (ICAEW, 1996). The requirements of these two groups are different. As might be expected, the large firms look for more generic skills, whereas the smaller ones tend to seek the traditional, craft ones. As far as the Institute is concerned this causes a problem because any plans to revise the training format have to be passed by a majority of members. Most chartered accountants work in smaller firms, yet their economic and political influence is relatively insignificant compared to the largest ones.⁵ The large firms can also recruit the best graduates, afford Training Partners, exert influence over the Tutors and as a result, enjoy the greatest success in the examinations. Their values position on examinations is clear: they want and indeed expect their trainees to pass and they are ruthless with those who do not. The small firms' position is more ambiguous. Often unqualified trainees perform the same jobs that qualified people do, but at much lower salary levels. Indeed it is often the case that accountants either choose to leave the small firm that trained them when they qualify or are forced to do so because the firm simply cannot afford a qualified person's salary.

The second challenge facing the ICAEW is increasing competition in general business from people with other qualifications and in particular from members of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA). The CIMA training, as its name suggests, is more geared towards management and is therefore perceived as being a more flexible qualification. Recruitment figures reflect this. At their peak in the late 1980s, the ICAEW was recruiting between 6000 and 7000 people per year with a further 8000 or so opting for ACCA status and around 5000 for SIMA. In 1995 the equivalent figures were 3936, 9886 and 6486 (ICAEW, 1996). The needs of business and the needs of general practice are different, but the ICAEW training and in particular the examinations, do not differentiate. It may be that changing recruitment illustrates a growing lack of 'congruence' between the values and aspirations projected by the ICAEW examinations and those of an increasingly integrated and dynamic business world. The difficulty for the Institute is, as we saw above, that even if they recognise this (and the evidence of their attempts to reform the examination system suggests that they do) they are always liable to be prevented from changing by their small firm membership.

⁵ This was brought to a head when, in January 1996 an individual member of a small firm in Liverpool raised enough support from other small firms to prevent a change to the examination syllabus. These changes would have introduced Core and Option papers in line with the demands of the larger firms for examinations better suited to the needs of modern accountancy (ICAEW, 1996: 6).

The third challenge is the increasing costs of training. For a good graduate looking to join a firm, the training package is almost as important a consideration as the starting salary, because qualification will determine life-long earnings. Thus, where once trainees took correspondence courses, they now expect block release up to the time of the examinations. The Tutors are staffed almost exclusively by chartered accountants and the fees charged to the firms reflect the employment packages they have to offer their lecturers. In addition, the training in the firms requires dedicated Training Partners who have to be released from normal fee generating work. Taken together, as the Henley Centre put it:

"The Institute currently demands a level of training which many training offices are finding too expensive. In larger firms this issue is focusing attention on whether other, *non accountancy based skills*, are more relevant for future development. In smaller firms it is resulting in an increase in the numbers training for less demanding accountancy qualifications." (Henley Centre, 1996: 18. Emphasis added.)

The kind of skills referred to are precisely those one might expect to find in a business studies course. In a survey of ICAEW members' views undertaken in 1996, the five main skills were described in order as: technical skills in accounting; good interpersonal/communications skills; computer/IT skills; commercial awareness and an understanding of the fundamental principles of accountancy (MORI, 1996: 4). These findings need to be treated with caution, however, because any survey of members views will be skewed by the numerical dominance of small partnerships. My research indicates that the views of the trainers in larger firms reflect a somewhat different emphasis, in particular on business problem-solving skills.

There is, then, a clash of values that lies at the heart of the current accountancy training regime. For the small firms, a particular kind of technical expertise remains a paramount concern, although one which is perhaps changing (Simon & Kedslie, 1997). For the larger ones technical knowledge is important, but so too are other skills.

7.6 Field research: investigating the values of the ICAEW examinations

The object of the research that is reported here was to establish the extent to which the examination system reinforced the values of the profession; the extent to which maturity was considered and the ways that any changes to the assessment system might affect the values projected and received. The work involved semi-structured interviews with training partners in two of the largest firms based in London and one medium sized partnership in the provinces. Interviews were also conducted with the Tutors, three firms based in London, one in Leeds and one a residential firm based in Gloucestershire. In total eighteen people were interviewed for a period of fourteen hours and thirty minutes. Thirty four hours of teaching were also observed over thirteen days in the Tutor firms. Nine Final, eight Intermediate and six Conversion classes were seen. A questionnaire, which was piloted in one of the Tutor firms, was distributed to trainees at the end of each observed lesson and collected. 200 were issued and 173 returned, a response rate of 86.5%.

The analysis of the data revealed the following issues, all of which are related to the values which have come to dominate the examination and the processes. First, there was a confusion over *strategy* i.e. what the training process was trying to achieve and, when defined, whether it actually achieved it. Second, *transparency* in the examinations themselves, meaning the extent to which all the participants - trainers in firms, tutors and candidates - knew what was required, know the system by which the work was assessed and how marks were awarded. Third, *inclusivity*, the term introduced above to describe the extent to which the examinations in particular, were designed to support the acquisition of competences over time.

7.6.1 Strategy.

As we have seen in previous chapters, effective education, training and assessment systems are designed with clearly defined aims and objectives. Asking accountants to define the aims of the accountancy examinations provoked a variety of responses, which were categorised into five main areas. They were, in order of frequency:

1. To guarantee actual or potential competence. Exams were seen as part of larger process of developing professionalism and providing a general accounting background.
2. To give the public confidence that the accountant has a particular level of intelligence, and is competent in a range of technical skills.
3. To test the ability to work under pressure and make individual judgements.

4. To test 'intelligence'.
5. To enable students to make career choices. By covering all areas of accountancy, the exams help to identify particular areas of technical strengths and weaknesses.

Little mention in my research was made of the socialisation process which both Geddes (1995), and Grey, Robson and Anderson (1997) identified, and which will be dealt with below under *Inclusivity*.

Whether the exams *in practice* achieved these aims and objectives was disputed, although there was general agreement that they provided a baseline of competence, accepting that any theoretical knowledge was likely to become outdated rapidly. The candidates themselves disagreed that the examinations were to do with practical application. They regarded the exams as a hurdle and a test of 'examship' not accounting ability (see also, Grey, 1997).

There was general agreement that the exams are either as hard or harder than they were in the past. It was felt that this reflected not only the increased volume of information which has to be processed today,⁶ but also the lack of a strategic view as to the objectives of the examinations. This point will be dealt with in more detail under *Inclusivity*.

It appeared that there is no consensus on the range of skills, characteristics and experiences that a chartered accountant should possess at the end of training, or perhaps better, three years after qualifying. The belief that the exams were a way of testing intelligence was curious given the academic backgrounds and qualifications of the candidates; it seemed that almost no account was taken of previous experience or development except in certain, limited exemptions. The research revealed a lack of clarity on aims and objectives, and whilst this may reflect the differing perspectives of large/small firms, practising or business needs, it reflects the fragmentation mentioned above. This result confirmed questionnaire data reported by MORI (1996, 16).

7.6.2 Transparency.

Having examined evidence concerning the setting and marking of the papers, the mark schemes and post-examination follow-up, the conclusion was that transparency was generally poor, but improving. There was general agreement that the task of

⁶ In 1918 Tax Law was contained in 180 pages, by 1952 it was 510 pages, but by 1977 it had grown to 2000 pages (Parker, 1978, quoted in Geddes, 1995: 99).

being an examiner was an unenviable one, being relatively poorly paid and usually undertaken as an extra to general accounting work. The perception, particularly amongst the candidates and some Tutors was that the ICAEW was unlikely to upset examiners by being critical of their setting and marking. Nevertheless, the research showed that stories about skim marking, reliance on neatness rather than accuracy and so on were more likely to be rumour than fact.

Undoubtedly the Tutors regarded the main part of their work to be that of developing exam technique, or 'mark grubbing' as it is sometimes called, rather than imparting deep-seated technical knowledge. That said, changes to the papers, and in particular to the Final Papers, which now include a Case Study, have forced the Tutors to change their teaching techniques, as we saw in the Strategy question of the Nuffield A-level (chapter five). This style of assessment requires students to role-play; accept that there is no simple or single 'right answer' and develop new skills entirely, since there is a mass of material that has to be sifted as well as analysed. The observed teaching of this paper was much more like that one might see today in a school or college classroom: students working in groups with the lecturer as facilitator. All other lessons observed were almost wholly didactic.

Another aspect of a lack of transparency occurred when a syllabus change took place recently. Despite intense lobbying from the Tutors, a specimen paper was not issued by the Institute on the grounds of cost, and so both the Tutors and the candidates felt they were working in the dark. It was only with great reluctance that the examiner was allowed to meet the Tutors in advance of the first sitting to discuss how the paper would be written.

In another case an examiner prided himself on being able to produce 'Tutor-proof questions', meaning that they could not be anticipated and so revised for. This sits in stark contrast to much assessment thinking, which stresses positive achievement. GCSE examinations, for instance, are said to be written on the assumption that they should reveal what students 'know, understand and can do', rather than what they do *not* know (Gipps, 1994: 36).

Instead of model answers being issued by the examiners after the paper has been sat, in a reversal of common practice in public examinations, Tutors write their versions and send them to the examiners for approval. In one case a model answer was submitted, returned without comment on its shortcomings, but with a request that it be re-submitted in an improved form. Related to model answers and another area which sits in stark contrast to GCSE and GCE examination, is mark schemes. It is generally

accepted good practice, and one that all examination boards insist on, that examination papers should be written with mark schemes alongside; indeed some would argue that a complete examination paper consists of both elements - the questions and their answers. Nevertheless, mark schemes can vary in quality. Some consist of vague generalisations that are of little help to markers in ensuring reliability and even less of a guide to those studying ways to improve performance in the future. The publication of mark schemes imposes an obligation on the setter that improves the service to all interested parties, and certainly all the Tutors interviewed were enthusiastic supporters of the idea.

All the elements outlined above indicate a system that is predicated on an outdated model of assessment, but which suits the values of certain parts of the profession. For them the aims and objectives can only be achieved through a certain, perhaps high percentage of candidates failing. For others, as we have seen, this is not acceptable. There is pressure to improve transparency and a consistent pattern of improvements. For instance, Examiners now meet Tutors regularly to discuss papers and there is much less of a 'them and us' attitude that prevailed in the 1970s and 1980s.

7.6.3 Inclusivity.

One of the issues that was raised in the research, either implicitly or explicitly, was the extent to which the entire training and examination system was *inclusive* or not. In other words, was it designed to be passed by virtually everyone, albeit not necessarily at the first attempt, so that people were included within the system by virtue of their common knowledge, or was each stage a hurdle, built to maintain the exclusivity of the professionals within, by failing a high proportion of those taking the exams? This strikes at the heart of the values issues. The examinations were seen as having a clear socialisation function, which draws in those who aspire to the qualification whilst excluding those who do not (or cannot) fit the values base. The difficulty then becomes one of determining a pass/fail line. This can be done simply by norm referencing and if the quality of the candidature rises over time, a constant pass rate will emphasise exclusivity. The ICAEW denies that norm referencing takes place, although research by Foulkes shows that there is severe bunching around the (pre-determined) pass mark (Foulkes, 1997).

Another way of emphasising exclusivity is to make the exams harder, and indeed the majority view was that the examinations as a whole have become more difficult over time. Respondents based this conclusion on three elements. First, they felt syllabuses have become wider and simply contain more information to be assimilated. Second,

that more technical information has to be acquired earlier in the process. Third, more higher level skills are being assessed. All of these are probably true, but the argument of increased difficulty was challenged by other members who cited the fact that trainees are now given block release and other aides which were not available in the past and so in a sense, the candidates *should* be able to do more. There was a substantial minority of those interviewed, however, who felt that the exams were at or around the same level as before. No one thought that they had become easier.

As in the entire system of training chartered accountants, the notion of inclusivity is bounded by the differing values base of sectors of the membership. The next section will explore this issue in more detail.

7.7 Values and Chartered Accountancy

The question of values within the training of accountants is not so much concerned with the values contained within the examination papers - they are generally value-free, being largely data manipulation⁷ - as they are with those which are projected through the complete vocational training process. The schism within the profession, but in particular within the ICAEW, reflects a shifting value set brought about by changing roles in an altered business environment.

In effect there are now three distinct groups of chartered accountants: first, there are those in small firms, often in the provinces, serving a traditional clientele that includes individuals and local businesses. Second there are those who work in the large firms. These organisations are multinationals, predominantly based in London and the major cities. Their clients are large companies who demand and expect a service well beyond a simple audit of their accounts. The third group consists of those accountants who work in business as financial advisers or directors, who need a wide background understanding of the way firms operate.

The values base of these groups is substantially different, and separating over time. The small organisations, typically partnerships with up to fifty employees, are generally run by partners who trained in the 1960s and 1970s when the examination papers, and indeed the entire profession was quite different (see pages 184-185). This lends them a particular perspective. Given the demands of their market, current examinations need to be as close to traditional accounting as possible. Because of

⁷ There is an implicit acceptance of the social, economic and legislative *status quo*, however.

limited resources, they also have a concern about the cost of training, which is going up, and which they fear will rise even more if the examination system becomes more sophisticated.

For the large firms the underlying purposes and values of the training are quite different. First, they recruit the best graduates. They compete with each other for these students and one way in which they can attract the most able is to offer support during training, which is expensive. They try to reduce the cost of the external part of the process by negotiating fees with the Tutors, and sometimes simply switching from one Tutor to another, for no other reason than to keep the price competitive. This in turn leaves the Tutors with little in the way of margins, which forces them to adopt an almost wholly didactic style of teaching that has little to do with education and deep seated understanding (Lines and Wolf, 1996). Because they recruit the best graduates, the value they place on the training process is different from the small firms in another important respect - they *expect* their trainees to pass and there is strong evidence that success in the chartered exams is directly related to the class and source of degree⁸ (Geddes: 348, 350).

Each of the largest firms regards its trainees as in some way a unique reflection of its corporate culture. For instance, each one tends to recruit from different colleges in the major universities, and in addition to class and type of degree, look for different personal attributes such as sporting prowess or a liking for the arts. This can be taken to extremes, so that in order to avoid what might crudely be termed 'contamination' by trainees from other firms, some of them even prefer their trainees to be taught exclusively in one classroom. So, the socialisation process is not just confined to the profession, it is as much to do with acquiring the values of Coopers & Lybrand or Ernst & Young or Andersens, with the special and particular values that each firm possesses. Indeed, given the costs involved, there is a feeling amongst the largest firms that the ICAEW qualification is becoming less important in the market place than being, say, a Price Waterhouse-trained accountant. Certainly it is possible that, having worked for several years for one of these organisations, the experience would carry almost as much weight as the paper qualification - but it would also make a return to general practice in a small firm difficult, if not impossible.

A further reason why the large firms expect their trainees to pass the examinations is the fact that they are competing for the best graduates against other highly paid and prestigious professions such as merchant banking, or with other qualifications that

⁸ UCAS points are also a good indicator. One trainer in a major firm told me that A-level scores were better in this regard than degrees, which, he felt, were becoming increasingly devalued.

provide access to similar careers, such as an MBA. Obviously someone with a first class honours degree from one of the top universities will, amongst other things, be weighing up competing salary levels upon qualification, but they will also have to make a judgement on the amount of extra work that becoming qualified will require, and the risk of *not* achieving that qualification. It was revealing in the research how traumatic any failure in the accounting exams was to those who had gone through schooling and university without a hint of failure up to that time. For all these reasons, large firms favour inclusivity; to them the examination system is useful but only in a limited way. They argue that their recruitment, selection and in-house training procedures are rigorous enough to determine likely candidates and that no further hurdles are needed, especially not examinations that are becoming increasingly expensive to pass.

As far as chartered accountants within the general business community are concerned, there is a question for the ICAEW of competition with other qualifications, and in particular with CIMA, which is generally perceived as being of more relevance. This is part of a larger picture, however, because the needs of the business community and the largest accountancy firms are in much closer alignment than those of the smaller partnerships. As we saw above, these firms are multinational consultancy organisations as much as firms of accountants and so they are seeking different skills in their trainees. This change was perhaps best illustrated in the recent modifications to the ICAEW Finals papers, which represented a philosophical shift from a hierarchical framework both within the firms and in the examinations, towards the notion of 'The Thinking Professional'.

7.8 'Maturation' and becoming a Chartered Accountant

There is a gulf between the training for the chartered accountancy examinations and the skills that the trainees have acquired during their education. The profession virtually ignores both the content and the teaching style that the trainees have received in their education, other than using it as a way of initial selection.

The research showed that the pedagogic style that the Tutors were forced to adopt, largely because of the financial constraints imposed on them by the firms, was heavily didactic⁹ (Lines and Wolf, 1996; Hoskin, 1997). As a result the trainees faced a style

⁹ Of lessons observed, teacher-talk varied between 19% and 80% with both a mean and median of 50%. Questions and answers varied between 5% and 50% with a mean of 16% and median of 10%.

almost totally at odds with that which they had experienced throughout most of their school and to a lesser extent, university lives.¹⁰ Tutors were not only forced to adopt a didactic style, but also to pay close attention to what they termed 'mark grubbing', that is to say looking at every question and optimising its mark potential. Thus, trainees were taught that it was unlikely that they would get a trail balance out in the time available and so they should concentrate on certain aspects, including, interestingly, making it 'look right'. Since the tutors were accountants and not trained teachers, their style largely reflected their different personalities, but the teaching was largely programmed (Lines & Wolf, 1996) and this allowed little time for what might be termed 'enquiry' or 'discovery' learning and even less for differentiation.¹¹

For the trainees there was strong feeling that having successfully gone through a conventional education and having evolved a particular learning style, that they entered the chartered examinations to discover that such a style was inappropriate; instead that fact accumulation and repetition were the ultimate requirements, especially so at Intermediate level where the technical content was very high. Grey, Robson and Anderson "....conclude that university education in general, and accounting degrees in particular, have only limited value as a preparation for ICAEW training" (Grey *et. al.* : 27) and furthermore that "relevant degrees are perceived by most (trainees) as a handicap" (*ibid.* : 29. Parenthesis added)

The moves towards examining the 'Thinking Professional' in the Final examinations, which is more in line with the large firms' requirements, does take past learning and maturity more into account. The difficulty for the trainees, however, will be that having made the adjustment to the teaching and learning required at Intermediate they will be asked to switch back again to the higher skills of decision making, synthesis and evaluation that they may have learnt many years earlier for A-level. Thus, a more conventional educational style will return, which is more interesting for both the trainees and Tutors and which more closely follows changes now taking place in training for the Law and Medicine (Hoskin and Geddes, 1997: 1). How such changes will impact upon pass rates has yet to be tested, however.

The remainder was directed student activity that varied between 5% and 70% with a mean of 32% and a median of 27%. The figures for directed student activity was significantly greater in revision classes.

¹⁰ Only 4% of respondents to the questionnaire stated that the teaching and learning style they experienced in training to be an accountant was 'similar' to that which they had experienced in their post-16 education.

¹¹ This research supports the finding of Power (1991) that students had little time to question the philosophy or content of the examination. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the results of the MORI poll of those currently in training showed a disenchantment with the examination system as a way of protecting the quality of the qualification and as a way of restricting numbers within the cohort. Respondents who were qualified thought the opposite (MORI, 1995: 16).

7.9 The role of the State, the Education Service and the Training of Accountants

It is interesting to speculate on the reasons why the training of such an important profession as accountancy is left in the hands of the members of the profession itself. Anti vocationalism has deep roots in the academic world¹² as we have seen, but there is also a reverse effect which sees the 'do-ers', who get on with the day-to-day business of accounting wanting nothing to do with wider educational issues. Once again there is a clash of values. Geddes argues that:

"Practitioners wanted students to do a job of work in what they regarded as a 'practical' profession; they displayed no interest in education as such beyond the instilling of technical skills, and previous brushes with academia had not proved conducive to the development of cordial relations. University accounting was not highly regarded because relevant graduates performed less well in professional examinations than graduates in other disciplines and joined the firms with little practical knowledge; also the refusal of Oxford and Cambridge to offer accounting degrees meant that those firms who wanted to recruit the 'best' graduates inevitably chose non-relevant ones." (Geddes, 1995: 19)

The reasons why colleges and universities fail to offer chartered accountancy training within their establishments lies outside the scope of this work, but their reluctance plays into the hands of those within the profession who argue for self-regulation. Despite evidence of accounting 'shortcomings' in protecting the public, governments appear similarly hesitant to impose regulatory controls. The profession's response to the accounting failures of the 1960s was to set up an Accounting Standards Committee which issues Statements of Standard Accounting Practice (SSAPs), but as the Guinness and Maxwell scandals of the 1980s showed, they were not effective. It does not follow, of course, that government regulations would have been any more so, but they would at least have avoided any discussion over the ethical dilemmas of self regulation. Given recent controversies in other professions, such as medicine, it is unlikely that this debate has ended. Indeed, it is possible to see post-qualification self-regulation as an extension of that applied to pre-qualification training. Absorbing the latter into a national framework would almost certainly call into question the *raison d'être* of the former as well as its underlying assumptions and values.

¹² What might be termed the ghetto-isation of vocational education is discussed by Benn and Chitty (1998) in the context of post-16 education, where sixth form colleges cream the A-level students and the rest go to F.E. colleges which, perforce, teach vocational skills.

7.10 Vocational Qualifications: A Template for the Future?

The wide ranging demands increasingly placed on chartered accountants has called into question the relevance of the vocational training that they receive (Henley Centre, 1996; ICAEW, 1996; MORI, 1996). Nevertheless, the existence of an examination structure is critical to professionalism. As Geddes puts it:

"....whilst having such things as difficult examinations or ethical codes does not *make* an occupation a profession, it becomes the norm for those occupations which are known as profession *to* have them."

(Geddes, 1995: 26. Emphasis in original)

and

"The passing of professional examinations may be seen more as a signal of intrinsic academic ability, so that what comes to matter most about professional examinations is that they are taken, and passed, rather than any specific knowledge is imparted whilst going through the process." (*Ibid.*: 28)

Yet having an examination system simply as a hurdle with scant regard for maturity brings the values issue sharply into focus, and may trigger wider thoughts about vocational qualifications. In an age where change is a dominant feature, where the so-called Information Revolution is now a fact of life and where lifelong learning is regarded by the government as an essential prerequisite to an economy in the 21st century (National Commission on Education, 1993), can occupation-specific vocational qualifications ever be more than a method of (briefly) providing the skills required? Instead, are they not simply part of a socialisation process - a means of inducting some individuals into a particular group's values, whilst excluding others, largely in order to maintain, or even increase earnings?

If change and lifelong learning are to be amongst the foremost features of the next century, then there must be an argument for the place of an education component within the structure of vocational qualifications. This will enable generic skills to be taught alongside occupationally specific ones in order to maintain flexibility in the labour market, not simply for the sake of the economy as a whole but importantly for the welfare of the individuals whose skills may otherwise be rendered redundant by technologies and revolutions which are, at present, unknown and unpredictable. This would require NVQs to be closer to the original (1991) notion of GNVQs (see chapter

six) but it also means that important, prestigious qualifications such as those for chartered accountancy would have to be codified and brought into a national framework. Only then would the system demonstrate consistency and a values base open for discussion and critical analysis.

7.11 Conclusion

The ICAEW qualification is in danger of losing its place as one of the UK's premier business qualifications. This is partly the result of the increasingly fragmented nature of accountancy, brought about by changes in business practices globally. Each group within the profession emphasises different values, though all agree on an overall values framework that is often unstated but which falls under the term of 'socialisation'. Maturation is almost totally ignored under the present examination system, other than through a limited acceptance of prior learning in the form of exemptions from some papers. In addition, the need to induct some, and exclude others results in a sterile system designed, it seems, more as a hurdle or barrier to entry than a fulfilling educational experience that might challenge preconceptions and explore issues of values. This omission is important when one recognises the level of trust that society places in accountants. Some of that trust has undoubtedly been lost, most recently though the financial scandals of the late 1980s, which called into question the accountant/client relationship. I therefore contend that the ICAEW system is no longer 'congruent'. Apart from a failure to recognise maturity, it also fails to reflect the business values that are expected of the profession, other than those that are either part of the statutory or self-regulated framework. A clear notion of what the examinations are trying to achieve, greater transparency in the assessment system and a recognition of inclusivity would all help in my view, to recover congruence and in the process ensure the continued pre-eminence of the ICAEW qualification in business.

This chapter has closed with a possible way forward for NVQs, which is appropriate as we end part two, because in part three we shall also be looking forward. In it we shall return once more to mainstream educational matters, looking into possible scenarios that might point to further developments, particularly in the fields of economics and business education.

7.12 References

- Beaumont, G. (1995) *Review of 100 NVQs and SVQs: A Report Submitted for the DfEE*, London: DFEE.
- Benn, C., and Chitty, C. (1998) "Post-16 Provision: the next battleground for Comprehensive Education" in *Forum*, Vol. 40, No. 2: 50-51.
- (DOE) Department of Employment, (1972) *Training for the Future*, London: HMSO.
- Foulkes, J. (1997) "Examining and Results Determination System Analysis" in Hoskin, K., and Geddes, B. (Eds.) *ICAEW Pass Rates Research*, London: ICAEW.
- Geddes, B. (1995) *The Development of Accountancy Education, Training and Research in England: A study of the Relationship between Professional Education and Training, Academic Education and Research, and Professional Practice in English Chartered Accountancy*, Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Manchester.
- Gipps, C. (1994) *Beyond Testing*, London: Falmer Press.
- Grey, C., Robson, K., and Anderson, F. (1997) "Pass Rates Research: The Trainees Experience" in Hoskin, K., and Geddes, B (Eds.) *ICAEW Pass Rates Research* London: ICAEW.
- Henley Centre (1996) "The Demand for and demands on Chartered Accountants to the Year 2002" in Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, *Safeguarding the Future: An Education and Training Consultation Document*, London: ICAEW.
- Hoskin, K., and Geddes, B (1997) (Eds.) *ICAEW Pass Rates Research*, London: ICAEW.
- Hyland, T. (1994) *Competence, Education and NVQs*, London: Cassell.
- (ICAEW) Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, (1993) *Chartered Accountant - the Future of our Qualification. Report on Strategy for Education and Training*, London: ICAEW.

- (ICAEW) Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, (1996) *Safeguarding the Future: An Education and Training Consultation Document*, London: ICAEW.
- Lines, D., and Wolf, A. (1996) *Strategies For Improving Instruction And Student Performance: A Report to the Accountancy Tuition Centre*, Unpublished.
- (MORI) Market and Opinion Research International (1996) *Survey of Members' views on Education and Training*, London: ICAEW.
- National Commission on Education, (1993) *Learning to Succeed*, London: Heinemann.
- Parker, R. H. (1978) "British Men of Account" in *Abacus*, June, pp. 53-65.
- Power, M. K. (1991) "Educating Accountants: Towards a Critical Ethnography" in *Accounting, Organisations and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 333-353.
- Robinson, P. (1996) *Rhetoric and Reality: Britain's New Vocational Qualifications and its Centre for Economic Performance*, London: LSE.
- Simon, J., and Kedslie, M. (1997) *Factors Affecting Selection and Trainee Chartered Accountants*, Department of Accounting and Finance, University of Hull: paper presented at the British Accounting Association Annual Conference, Birmingham.
- Smithers, A. (1998) "Is there a better way than A?" in *Times Educational Supplement* 7th August. p. 9.
- Unwin, L. (1997) "Reforming the Work-Based Route: Problems and Potential for Change" in Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.
- Wighton, D., and Kelly, J. (1997) "Row over training subsidies at accounts firms" in *The Financial Times*, 14th March.
- Wolf, A. (1995a) *Competence-based Assessment*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Wolf, A. (1995b) *An Assessment-Driven System: Education and Training in England and Wales*, ICRA Research Monographs No. 3, London: ULIE.

Part 3: Directions For The Future

This work has concentrated largely on historical accounts of curriculum planning and associated or derived curriculum initiatives, especially in the fields of business and economics education and training. In so doing it has analysed the impact of curriculum development using the notion of values and the developing young person as constructs. It is now time to offer further exemplification of the way values and maturity interact, suggesting ways forward in curriculum development that build on the lessons of the past as described in Part Two.

Part Three offers two examples that attempt to take forward curriculum development in business and economics education. Chapter eight describes a small-scale research project that examined the teaching of business. Under review was a suggestion that pedagogy might be modified in order to encourage students to think critically and thus question the underlying or implied values base in the material they were presented with in class, in textbooks and in examinations. Finally, chapter nine concentrates on economics, and a possible way forward for a subject that, as we have already seen, is suffering from a decline in numbers choosing its study, but which at the same time still offers considerable and special insights into the values that people and society hold today and may wish to 'pass on' to future generations.

CHAPTER 8

THINKING SKILLS: IMPROVING THE CRITIQUE OF BUSINESS

8.1 Introduction

As a Chief Examiner of GCE A-level for nearly ten years, I was consistently disappointed by the apparent inability of candidates to demonstrate what are commonly termed the 'higher level' skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation in their examination papers, even when it was apparent that they had been well prepared and knew the subject content well. This was especially evident when it came to answering questions that required them to analyse critically the underlying ethical/values framework of the business system; a skill which, as I have stressed in this thesis and elsewhere (Lines, 1987), is fundamental to 'thinking' business studies.

A reasonable hypothesis was therefore, that thinking skills were not being taught, and as a result students were unable to recognise the need to question underlying assumptions and implied values. From that followed a further field of enquiry: that certain subjects, because of their fundamentally different constructs, particularly philosophy and religious education, might have something to offer business studies students that could be applied in the future. This chapter describes how the hypothesis was 'tested' and draws a necessarily tentative conclusion that indeed such a cross-fertilisation might be valuable. It also raises the issue of the maturing learner. If, as the evidence presented in this chapter suggests, the teaching of thinking skills is effective in encouraging students to question both their values and those of the business world, at what point should it be introduced into the curriculum? This is of importance to the thesis because, as I have argued earlier, 'congruence' can only be achieved when questions concerning values are raised in the curriculum at an appropriate point in a student's development, one which allows such issues to be synthesised and evaluated effectively.

8.2 Problems of definition

"Critical Thinking" has recently acquired some currency; indeed it is on the list of free standing AS levels proposed by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA, 1997b). However, the term is used to suggest a number of alternative approaches, from the very brief material in the General Studies Core (SCAA, 1997a)

to the Critical Thinking course at the University of East Anglia and the CASE Project (the Cognitive Acceleration Through Science programme), run by Adey and Shayer at King's College London (Adey and Shayer, 1994).

Whilst much of this reading and research provided a useful background¹ to my work in economics and business, it was important not to become over concerned with the debate over what exactly constitutes critical thinking; the prime concern was with students' abilities to *reason*, to present arguments and in particular to identify the assumptions and presuppositions that underpin those arguments. In other words to develop their *thinking skills*. By so doing, not only would the students reap benefits in their other subjects (as the evidence produced by the CASE project shows [*ibid.*]), but they would also acquire an important life skill. In addition, there would be an impact upon business studies itself, since it would answer provide a foundation upon which to build a response to those critics who perceive the subject as simplistic, mechanistic, or instrumental (Barnes, 1993: 41). Should it be desired, it would also offer a means of separating vocational Business from A-level (Dearing, 1996).

8.3 The role of business ethics

Business Studies has been examining the place of business in a general context, and in particular ethical issues, since its inception in the late 1960s. The following examples of questions illustrate this point. They were all set by the author for the AEB, the largest subject-entry syllabus in business studies at Advanced level:

In 1991 the collapse of BCCI and the Maxwell Corporation appeared to suggest a decline of ethical standards in business practice.

(a) Do you agree with the statement made in the question?

Explain your answer. (9 Marks)

(b) To what extent are business ethics vital to the long term survival and growth of any business? (16 Marks)

(AEB, P2 June 1993)

In First World countries there are some products which are considered unethical or are legally restricted. Such products are

¹ This was particularly true of the evidence from the National Commission on Education (1993) that showed how performance could be improved, not just in Science, the subject through which thinking skills were being taught, but also in English and mathematics as well.

frequently dumped in the Third World. Evaluate this practice.

(25 Marks)

(AEB, P2 Nov. 1992)

The Dumpit Corporation is a major local employer which processes low level toxic waste to make it safe. The directors of Dumpit are eager to expand the company and so are considering investing in new plant and machinery to process high grade - and therefore more dangerous - waste products.

Write a report for the directors outlining all the elements which should be considered before proceeding with the plan.

(25 Marks)

(AEB, P2 June 1991)

There are pressures on managers to maintain or improve safety standards for the benefit of employers, customers and the general public and yet major industrial accidents (on the scale of Bhopal and Zeebrugge) still occasionally occur. Describe these pressures and analyse why they might sometimes fail to achieve the desired effect.

(20 Marks)

(AEB, P2 Nov. 1990)

Few would suggest that these questions indicate an unthinking acceptance of profit maximisation as the sole or even the primary goal of business. All require the candidates to consider long term aims and objectives and the roles and responsibilities of business within society; in other words, to question the values base. This tradition is continued in the subject core for business studies (SCAA, 1997b) to which all syllabuses must conform. Section 2, Principles for Syllabus Construction state:

"(g).....Syllabuses should also make students aware of how objectives may be influenced or determined by economic, environmental, ethical, governmental, legal, social and technological considerations and responsibilities;

(m) encourage students to develop their capacity for critical thinking, to see relationships between different aspects of the subject and to perceive their field of study in a broader perspective;

- (q) indicate, where appropriate, ways in which the study of the subject can contribute to an understanding of spiritual, moral and cultural issues." (SCAA, 1997c: 3)

Selecting business ethics as a topic for investigation was based upon two tenets. First, because it is an area in which students can immediately recognise that there can be disagreement. It is self evident that a debate about moral values, about what is right and what is wrong, is part of their experience outside the business studies classroom as well as within it. Second, ethical arguments can easily be used to introduce students to the process of formal argument. In common with other forms, an ethical argument has presuppositions, such as the meaning of 'good'. It also appeals to an underlying theory that can be identified and, at a higher level of response, analysed and evaluated. It proceeds by steps that may, or may not be valid and that may, or may not be true. Again, these steps can be identified, analysed and evaluated. This has immediate implications for assessment, as the following section goes on to discuss.

8.4 Assessing students' work

As was noted in chapter six, Bloom's taxonomy has been questioned as a means of identifying higher level skills. Nevertheless, it is still widely used as an indicator of candidate performance in externally set examinations. For instance, it is common practice to use 'levels of response' mark schemes, which are based around the idea that students can proceed through the levels (although they do not have to show evidence of each in turn) until they reach *synthesis*, *analysis* and *evaluation*, for which they will be awarded the highest marks. So, a twenty mark essay will typically have four levels. The first is solely content, and will be worth up to five marks. The second allows for more detailed content and/or some analysis, and will attract up to ten marks. Level three will be looking for analysis and synthesis for between ten and fifteen marks, and for sixteen to twenty, evaluation will be required.

The crucial point flowing from this is that simple regurgitation of knowledge is not enough to achieve a high grade; indeed in some senses it is counter-productive. Twenty bullet points would require a lot of 'learning' and a great deal of time to write, but would be worth a maximum of five marks; not even enough to achieve a pass. In contrast, three or four well argued, analysed and evaluated ones would certainly be worth an 'A' grade. A student who is setting out an argument, as opposed to bullet points, will be far more likely to produce a high level of response.

As a result of the public availability of mark schemes, reports by Chief Examiners and INSET supplied by examination boards, the emphasis on the acquisition of higher skills rather than factual content is well understood. There remains a distance, however, between this understanding, in theory, and classroom practice, where there is often an unspoken conspiracy between teacher and student, which results in the sterile giving and receiving of 'notes', in the mistaken belief that such an activity is somehow connected with achieving high examination grades. In contrast, a lesson that requires arguments to be dissected, underlying values examined and illogicalities revealed may leave little in the form of notes, nothing to 'learn' for homework and no textbook to read from. It is also hard work.

The crucial knowledge that students need is not only that quality is of far greater value than quantity, but what precisely that quality is. In other words, they need an understanding of what it *means* to 'evaluate'. I asked a sample of sixth formers who were attending an Easter revision course just a few weeks away from their A-level exams what they understood by the word and how it could be applied in an answer. Typical responses were: "It's a conclusion"; "It sums up what you've said" and "It brings together the points you made earlier." Overall, they were aware of how important it was "to evaluate" - their teachers had emphasised it often enough - but their knowledge of what it actually meant or how it could be translated in practice was at best sketchy and at worst, incorrect.

Clearly then, there is a problem at a quite basic level, which can be illustrated in the case of business studies, by an examination of textbooks. Almost without exception their approach to issues concerning values is to project them as 'the only way to think about Business Ethics'. No alternative theories are offered, nor is there any suggestion that a position might be questioned. Instead they are written as statements of truth. In this way the student is not helped or encouraged to recognise that the text in her book is in fact an argument, with assumptions and presuppositions about values that can and indeed should, be questioned. It may be that this lack of rigour is the result of a closed system; because the author has not been appropriately trained he or she cannot point it out any more than the teacher can identify it. As a result there is no-one to suggest that there might be alternative approaches and so the student is ill equipped to deal critically with the material with which she is presented.

Breaking into this system can be achieved at any one of a number of points, but experience suggests that the examination room is too late, and it is self evident that training teachers in a different way will take a long time to feed through. In fact expertise already exists in subjects where thinking critically is central - philosophy

and religious education.² It might therefore be possible to use such expertise and transfer it into business subjects or, indeed, across the entire curriculum.³

8.5 The research frame.

With the help of a colleague in a Sixth Form College in Hampshire, I asked 24 A-level students who were about to sit their examinations, to answer the question on business ethics set in June 1993 (see above). We selected a range of abilities and backgrounds, some who had studied GCSE business studies but who were not doing so for A-level; some the other way around. A further group were studying philosophy but had no experience of business studies and the final combination was those who were offering both business studies and philosophy. Also of interest was whether there was a distinction between those students who were following the Nuffield Economics and Business course with which I had had so much involvement (see chapter five) and those who were following conventional business studies syllabuses.

The twenty four consisted of two students in each of the following twelve categories. Each pair was studying:

- AEB Business Studies A level and A level Philosophy;
- AEB Business Studies A level, but not Philosophy;
- AEB Business Studies A level, and Religious Studies AS level (Philosophy of Religion and Ethics);
- AEB Business Studies A level, and who had done GCSE Religious Studies (Personal and Social Issues);
- AEB Business Studies A level, but not Religious Studies;
- Nuffield A level Business Studies, but not Philosophy A level;
- London A level Economics and A level Philosophy;
- London A level Economics, but not Philosophy;
- AS level Religious Studies (Philosophy of Religion and Ethics), but not Business Studies;
- AS level Religious Studies (Philosophy of Religion and Ethics), and who had done GCSE Business Studies;
- A level Philosophy, but not Business Studies;
- A level Philosophy, and who had done GCSE Business Studies.

² Religious Studies students were selected because the AS level Religious Studies (Philosophy of Religion and Ethics) also addresses the issue of ethical theory and the status of ethical arguments.

³ There is some evidence that this is happening. At Hammersmith Academy in London, Carl Wall has specific responsibility for the Quality of Learning across the curriculum, and in Australia, Brisbane Grammar School has instigated a "Critical Thinking" policy throughout the school.

The students were asked to write their answers without preparation in approximately 30 to 35 minutes. Some used a lunch-time, others took the questions home, but it was stressed that this was in no way a 'test' and so they should simply answer the question as best they could, without prejudice. All the responses were read and four were worthy of particular note. They belonged to Kirsty, Kate, Ellie and Robin. Each had an academic profile that made her or his answer especially interesting.

8.6 Analysing the responses

Part (b) of the question, which focuses on values, read:

"(b) To what extent are business ethics vital to the long term survival and growth of any business?"

The student responses to this part appear here in italics and, in terms of grammar and spelling, as they were written. Points that are commented upon appear in brackets in bold, thus: (1), (2), etc.

8.6.1. Kirsty:

At the time she was studying A level Business Studies (AEB) but not Philosophy. She did not do Religious Studies, even at GCSE.

b) Business ethics is vital to the long term survival and growth of business, as BCCI and Maxwell show. If a business acts illegally, (1) it is in danger of collapse when people find out.

(2) Businesses which act ethically do better than businesses which do not. They can attract more customers. People buy from the Body Shop because they are seen as ethical. If a business acts unethically, people boycott it. This happened to Shell when it dumped the oil rig. Many Shell garages lost a lot of profit when Greenpeace picketed their garages.

They might have better relationships with their workers. If you know that your employer is going to treat you ethically, you might be more motivated. Also, you are less likely to cheat an employer who treats you well.

They might have better relationships with their suppliers. If a supplier knows that they will not be cheated, they might let a business have credit.

So, if a business wants to grow, in the long term, it must act ethically. If it acts unethically, in the short term, to make a quick profit, it loses out in the long term.

Comment:

Kirsty's response would at best, reach level two in the mark scheme. It contains some sensible information and there is a very limited attempt at analysis (2). The problem is that the analysis is based solely on the implications of the statement in the question. All Kirsty does is to explain how, possibly, it might be in the interests of the business to act ethically. The only answer she gives is that it is good for a business's reputation and this impacts on its ability to trade.

Kirsty shows no grasp of what business ethics are or might be. In fact, she confuses 'ethical' with 'legal' (1). She does not grasp that the view of 'right' or 'wrong' that she accepts from the question, is highly debatable. She simply accepts that, in some way that she tries to spell out, acting ethically can be translated into 'acting profitably' by the business. That is why she does not get beyond level two. Although she writes further paragraphs, she effectively repeats the same point, using slightly different examples. So, while she writes more, it is not at a higher level of response.

8.6.2. *Kate:*

Unlike Kirsty she has never done Business Studies. She was studying AS level Religious Studies (Philosophy of Religion and Ethics) at the time.

b) Whoever wrote this question does not understand what ethics are. The question assumes that businesses only act ethically in their own interests.

To explain, the question assumes that a business will act ethically because it is in its own interests to (are a business's interests survival and growth??).

Looking at the question, I suppose this means that a business acts ethically because it gets good publicity (2). Many people buy from the Body Shop and not from other cosmetics companies because Anita Roddick is ethical (at least, she is always on the TV saying that she is). Being ethical gives the Body Shop more customers. Sometimes it has to do things which cost it money (I can't think of any - sorry)

because it looks ethical to do this, but, over time, it gains more back, because people buy its products.

This means that a business is being an ethical egoist (1). It is acting ethically because it profits it to do this. From the other side, it would not act ethically if it was not profitable to do so (3). Some people would argue that ethical egoism is not really ethics at all - it is just selfishness.

But there is a big problem with ethical egoism (4) Ethical egoism is irrational, because it only works if everyone else is behaving properly. For example, it is in my own interest to steal things, but this is only good for me if everyone else does not steal (if they did, I would have to spend all my time guarding my own stuff). The same would (I think?) apply to a business. If it had to spend all its time checking up to make sure that people were not cheating it, then, like me, it would not have time to do anything else!

The question looks as if it is saying that a business acts ethically because it is good for it. It also looks as if the business would not have to act ethically if it was not good for it. This is egoism and it does not work.

Comment:

Kate is in a fortunate position. She has learnt that, when she sees an 'ethical' argument, she has to determine the ethical theory being appealed to (1). Only when she has done this can she respond appropriately. For this reason, she explicitly identifies the ethical theory appealed to in the question as ethical egoism.

This allows her to do two things. First, it allows her to spell out exactly what the question is saying (2). This raises her answer to level two, because she is clearly analysing the question. Having identified the ethical theory being appealed to, Kate takes her analysis a stage further (3). She identifies alternative possible consequences of the business 'buying-into' that ethical theory; in this case, she identifies consequences that might cast doubt on the acceptability of ethical egoism as an ethical theory.

At (4), Kate demonstrates that she can evaluate. She points out the contradictions inherent in the appeal to ethical egoism. She evaluates, in a real sense, the merits and demerits of a business appealing to ethical egoism. She spells out, in an argument, "If a business appeals to ethical egoism, then the following will happen ...". Her

argument is quite clear; the business might benefit in the short term from behaviour that is 'good' in ethical egoist terms, but it cannot benefit in the longer term, especially if other businesses appeal to the same theory. Therefore - and this is evaluation in the proper sense - a business would be irrational if it appealed to ethical egoism.

8.6.3. Ellie:

For direct comparison, Ellie had the same ALIS⁴ score as Kirsty. She had done GCSE Business Studies and she was studying A-level Philosophy and AS level Religious Studies (Philosophy of Religion and Ethics) at the time.

b) This question is rather unclear. It is not obvious whether it is asked from an Ethical Egoist or a Utilitarian viewpoint. (1)

If it is from an ethical egoist standpoint (2) it is asking whether acting ethically is in the interests of a particular business. This seems a strange question. A Business's primary objective is to make a profit and it does not seem reasonable to ask it to act 'ethically'.

But it might be profitable for a business to act ethically. (3) If a business acts ethically - in a public way - it gets a good reputation. Many businesses, such as Marks and Spencers, do ethical actions, which give them good publicity and attract customers.

So, as an egoist, the business can profit from acting ethically. (4) The problem is that, if it did not profit the business to act ethically, if it was an ethical egoist, it would not have to act ethically. In fact, it would be its ethical duty to act in an 'unethical' way.

This is where the problem lies with egoism. Each business acts in its own interests and might act unethically, in its own interests. The problem is that it only profits you to act unethically if everyone else is acting ethically. No business would want to try to survive in an environment where it was threatened by other peoples' unethical behaviour, so no business, rationally, would be an ethical egoist.

So, perhaps the question is utilitarian (2). On this view, an ethical action is one which, on balance, brings about more pleasure than pain (or the least possible pain).

⁴ ALIS, the A-level Information Service, provides value-added data by comparing GCSE scores as inputs and A-level/GNVQ grades as outputs.

A business cannot survive in the long term if it pollutes the environment or swindles its customers, so it is in its long term interests to bring about the greatest happiness.

The problem with utilitarianism is that it allows absolutely anything. A business which was a utilitarian could do anything at all, so long as it produced the greatest overall happiness. For example, it could pollute a small, far away country and exploit the workers there, so long as the people in Britain were happy. Because utilitarianism allows anything at all to happen, provided the consequences are pleasant, many people reject it as an ethical theory.

There might be a way in which business ethics are vital to the long term survival and growth of a business (4). If you think of a business as a part of a community, everyone in that community has to act in an ethical way, to survive. We all accept limits on our behaviour, for the advantages of living in a society. We do not harm people, so they do not harm us. This is the Social Contract theory of ethics.

If I want to grow and prosper in society, I have rights, but if I have rights, I also have duties. I have the right not to be harmed, but I also have the duty not to harm people. If a business wants the right to be treated ethically (and it needs this - it does not want its customers and workers to try to cheat it all the time), it has a duty to behave ethically. It cannot survive without this.

Comment:

Ellie begins from an even stronger position than Kate. She recognises that it is not clear which of two possible ethical theories is being appealed to (1), so she spells out the consequences of an appeal to each of them (2). At points (3) and (4) Ellie analyses the consequences of appeal to ethical egoism and what it would mean for a business's behaviour. As with Kate, Ellie is able to identify the 'unacceptable' consequences of the appeal to ethical egoism.

Ellie then considers the alternative ethical theory - utilitarianism (2) and offers an analysis of the question in utilitarian terms. Her method is the same as Kirsty's: she details the consequences of an appeal to utilitarianism and then suggests the possible 'unacceptable' consequences of such an appeal. Unlike Kirsty, however, and despite an element of repetition, she offers a higher level of analysis. This is because she shows how an appeal to an alternative theory can have radically different consequences depending on the business's perception of what 'good' or 'bad' is.

Evaluation is in fact, implicit throughout this response. This is because Ellie offers an argument, taken to a clear, well reasoned conclusion. She tries and rejects for good reasons, ethical egoism on the one hand. She tries and rejects for equally good reasons, utilitarianism on the other. The important thing is that she shows that she is rejecting them both on the basis of their inherent contradictions. She evaluates them as ways of making ethical decisions and finds them wanting. Finally (4) she suggests an alternative. This alternative makes some sense of the statement in the question, whilst avoiding some of the more unpalatable consequences of appeal to the other theories.

Of course, this is not a perfect answer. Ellie has not studied business, so she lacks some of the information that would make her point more clearly. It remains philosophically shallow, but it is not intended to be an essay in philosophy. The important thing is that she identifies the (possible) presuppositions of an argument, sets out the steps in an argument, analyses that argument and then makes a sensible evaluation of it.

8.6.4 The first three answers: further comment.

Some might suggest that these three examples show two things. First, that students who have studied Philosophy can, within reason, offer an argument about most topics. This is a triumph of philosophical style over subject-based understanding and not a matter of much interest. Second, it casts doubt on the academic status of Business Studies. What is the position of a subject when students who have not studied it can write very good essays?

The response to both these arguments is fairly clear. The first misunderstands what is happening. It is not the case that Philosophy students can tackle *any* subject; it is the case that students who have been taught to reason can tackle *new* subjects. They know how to go about recognising, analysing and evaluating the arguments put forward in those subjects. The second makes a fair point, but the reason why the philosophy students were so able to produce reasonably good essays might have had something to do with the subject matter. They were accustomed to ethical arguments, and business ethics is simply a branch of ethics in general. Had they been faced with an essay from some other area of Business Studies they might not have been able to write essays without having done more research. For the highest quality responses, a combination of subject-specific knowledge and the ability to reason is essential.

8.6.5 Robin:

He was doing A level Business Studies (AEB), A level Philosophy and AS level Religious Studies (Philosophy of Religion and Ethics) at the time. The following is an extract:

Business ethics are about taking responsibility independently of the profit margin. This is seldom done. Kant suggested that morality involved treating other humans, who are valuable in themselves, always as ends and not at means. Also, he believed that it was wrong to act in a contradictory way. Now, in the world of business, the first may be impractical in all situations, but there is still the potential for more consideration of fellow people. No end, such as profit or market share ... are as valuable as human life. Just consider living on a desert island with the option of one other thing. Most people will choose a friend or partner - not profit. Being moral or ethical is about treating people as ends in themselves, not as means to lining the pockets of corporate business people.

A business may reply, that, in the economics, as opposed to the world of moral utopias, it is 'every man for himself.' But the practical as well as the philosophical consequences of this attitude are manifest contradictions. To have an egoist approach to business necessarily involves a moral society in which egoism is not the dominant moral system. Egoism ... only works against a certain background (i.e. moral altruism at best, or simple common decency). So the egoist approach from a business will eventually, in the long term, result in contradiction, as other firms do the same and the firm becomes the victim of their egoism. This destroys any aspirations of long term survival or growth.

Comment:

Robin's response combines a clear understanding of the philosophy, with a grasp of the subject matter of Business Studies. It is a very powerful piece of work that lifts the subject well beyond the mechanistic and strikes at what I consider to be the heart of business studies - the role of business within society.

8.7 Summary

Considering all twenty four answers, those students who received some training in thinking skills appeared to be able to do certain things. They could:

- identify a presupposition in a question (and hence a presupposition in an argument);
- identify the consequences that would follow from a presupposition;
- at a low level, identify the obvious consequences that would follow from a presupposition;
- at a higher level, identify the less obvious consequences that would follow;
- evaluate the 'acceptability' of the consequences.

In essence, they could deal with the informal logic of arguments. Those who had not received training in thinking skills, including Nuffield students, were limited precisely because they did not and possibly could not, do so.

8.8 Outcomes and the way ahead

It is clear that the size of the sample in this research makes generalisation somewhat hazardous,⁵ but on the evidence presented three points can tentatively be made. First, if we really want students to reach the higher skill levels we must provide them with the intellectual tools that enable them to do so. Expecting them to achieve this through some kind of osmosis is not only unrealistic, it is also antipathetic to the whole notion of education. Second, since high level skills are required in *all* subjects we may be able to raise the quality of answers regardless of the one being studied. Third, thinking skills should equip students to become more effective, independent and critical learners and are as vital as those currently defined as being 'key', especially given their importance for life-long learning.

In order for these conclusions to be hardened a great deal of work still has to be done. Other researchers need to test the hypothesis. Even if it can be shown that thinking skills are as effective a mechanism as indicated, encouraging the delivery of them will require considerable initial and in-service training and indeed perhaps even a change of culture. As Barber puts it, "....learning to think has not featured at all in the National Curriculum debate. Like reasoning, this should not be left to chance" (Barber, 1996: 181).

⁵ Replication was undertaken in another school by Brant (1998) to test the data. The results were less conclusive than here. The number of variables is large and therefore the sample would have to be considerably increased before any firm conclusions could be drawn. Such variables include: the relative skills of the teachers in the departments concerned, the ethos of the school/college, the tasks that are set, the abilities of the students and so on.

Such a change raises the question of resources, but there are others of perhaps a more fundamental nature, such as whether thinking skills should be integrated within subjects or be free standing; the extent to which they can be made interesting and attractive to a range of students, regardless of ability and finally, when should intervention take place - at 16+, 14+, or perhaps even earlier? After all, the process of maturing does change over time - to-day's teenagers reach puberty earlier than previous generations - and so it is prudent to consider a process of learning and thinking over a child's entire school life and indeed beyond. Unfortunately we rarely take a strategic view on such matters, as the evidence of the 1988 National Curriculum so vividly demonstrates (Aldrich & White, 1998: 2). A vital part of such an exercise would be to consider carefully the notion of 'congruence' that I have been advancing in this thesis. That is to say, recognising that it is necessary to tailor issues of values in the curriculum to an appropriate stage of maturity, when students are able, without feeling threatened, to challenge their own perceptions and question both the source and solidity of their beliefs.

8.9 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that when students examine both their values and those of business it is essential that they have a structure, introduced at an appropriate point in the process of development, which will enable them to synthesise and evaluate the information presented to them through both the formal and informal curriculum. Such intellectual tools will have applications across all subjects and will be life-long. Within the context of this thesis the application of these skills will make business subjects potentially even more exciting than at present, since business has such a crucial role in everyone's lives, be they producer, consumer or more likely, both.

In the next chapter we shall explore ways in which the quality of economics education might be improved, accepting that raising the quality of thinking could and should be applied as much to economics as to business. The chapter will concentrate on a quite different values position from the one usually adopted in economics education, and this, when combined with the thinking skills outlined above, could make its study of particular interest and importance.

8.10 References

Adey, P. and Shayer, M. (1994) *Really Raising Standards*, London, Routledge.

Aldrich, R. and White, J. (1998) *The National Curriculum beyond 2000: the QCA and the Aims of Education*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Barber, M. (1996) *The Learning Game. Arguments for an Educational Revolution*, London: Victor Gollancz.

Barnes, S. (1993) "A-level courses in Business Studies" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 1 No 1 Spring.

Brant, J. (1998) "Does Learning Business Studies (at Advanced level) Improve Student Ability to Articulate Value Positions?" *EdD Methods of Enquiry 2*, Unpublished EdD Paper, London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Dearing, R. (1996) *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds*, SCAA.

Lines, D. R. (1987) *Business Studies: The Search for a Paradigm*, Unpublished M. A. dissertation, London: ULIE.

National Commission on Education, (1993) *Learning to Succeed*, London: Heinemann.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1997a) *GCE Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary Examinations subject core for General Studies*, London: SCAA.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1997) *GCE A/AS Subject Core for Business Studies*, London: SCAA.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority Post-16 Briefing Team (1997c) "Syllabus Provision" in *Post-16 Briefing Notes*, London: SCAA.

CHAPTER 9

CHANGING THE VALUES BASE: TOWARDS A 'NEW ECONOMICS'

9.1 Introduction

As we have seen in earlier chapters, there appears to be a crisis in economics and economics education. Not only are fewer pupils studying the subject in schools (chapter four; SCAA, 1996), but numbers following degree courses are declining world-wide (Abelson, 1996; Brue, 1996; Pisanie, 1997; Green, 1998). The argument presented here is that this response is a reflection of dissatisfaction with the subject, brought about by the feeling that economics is largely irrelevant to the values and development of the young people at whom it is aimed. This is because it fails to address the really big ethical issues such as inequality, the arms trade, premature deaths, environmental degradation, female exploitation and so on (Hoogendijk, 1991; Ormerod, 1994; Lawson, 1997; Lines, 1997). The award of the 1998 Nobel prize for economics to Amartya Sen, who has been deeply concerned with such issues for many years, may indicate that a shift along the lines suggested here is imminent. It is, however, neither the concern nor the purpose of this thesis to suggest changes to economics as a discipline, but its methodology does relate to the issue of the maturity of the young people who are studying it, and in particular the way values and the learners' development interact. As we saw in chapter five, school economics has been largely based upon what is taught in university departments (Levacic, 1987), with the result, I argue, that it has largely ignored maturity and so has addressed issues and values in a way that is not 'congruent' with a different age group.

9.2 A market opportunity: economics and 'Business Education'

Over the past ten years, alongside the decline in A-level economics examination entry numbers there has been a compensating increase in those for business studies (chapter four). However, the fact that GNVQ Business and A-level Business Studies appear to be drawing closer in terms of both content and philosophy (chapter six), could offer a new opportunity to economics. If the two business courses are 'rationalised' - and there would undoubtedly be strong resistance from both the subject association (EBEA, 1995) and some examining boards were that to be formally proposed - then it is likely that business would be seen as the vocational, and economics the academic arm of what might loosely be describe as 'Business Education'.

However, for economics to exploit this potential opportunity it needs to transform itself. It has remained largely unchanged since its introduction into schools in the 1950s, other than by adding to its syllabus content and by modifications to its assessment regime. Taken together these have had negative effects on pedagogy that have resulted in student perceptions of the subject as being both 'hard' and irrelevant (see chapter four).

The early 1990s saw one explicit attempt to revise school economics, the Economics and Business Education Association's (EBEA) 16-19 Economics Project. In addition, the Nuffield Economics and Business Project was as we saw in Chapter five, concerned with economics but in a more implicit way. This chapter will examine both to see how they addressed issues of values in an economics context and suggests that neither did so in a coherent manner. It therefore proceeds tentatively to propose a way forward and suggest areas for further research.

9.3 Changing Economics

It may be that economics itself stands on the brink of a paradigm shift and it is that which is the root cause of the problem of declining interest in the subject. Certainly, the thinking that has driven much of the economics taught in schools, and also in universities for that matter, has been dominant for many years, and it may be time for a change. How might such a paradigm shift occur?

Popper (1959) argued that the only truly scientific method is by refutation or falsification. It is impossible to 'prove' anything - say, that all swans are white - but any hypothesis might be disproved - sighting the first black one. Thus a dominant theory holds until it is shown to be false. Kuhn (1970) pointed out that scientific knowledge tends to develop fitfully.¹ The dominant paradigm is supported by a college of people who resist any suggestion that their beliefs are flawed. Since jobs, promotions and status flow from membership of this college there is a tendency to defend the received wisdom, despite contradictory evidence. As a result scientific progress is minimal, because energy is used in defending what eventually turns out to

¹ Although Kuhn's ideas are often applied to economics (see Blaug, 1992; Munday, 1996: 11-12; Lawson, 1997: xvi), one needs to be careful about drawing too close a parallel. Kuhn's original notion of a 'scientific revolution' was one of profound change, which some believe economics has never gone through. Even the Keynesian 'revolution' was based on "the axiom of rationality and, perhaps, human greed" (Munday: 12). Nevertheless, there are indications that the current changes outlined in this chapter and elsewhere are of a more fundamental nature, in that the notion of self interest is being replaced by more universal concerns (*inter alia* Etzioni, 1988; Owensby, 1988; Hoogendijk: 1991; Ormerod, 1994; Turner *et. al.*, 1994; Lawson, 1997); hence the term 'New Economics'.

be the indefensible. Ultimately, however, the evidence becomes so powerful that it can no longer be ignored and a new paradigm supported by a new college, emerges.

Synthesising the ideas of Kuhn and Popper, Lakatos (1970) developed the notion of 'Scientific Research Programmes'. The hard core of knowledge is not open to attack by refutation because it is surrounded by a protective belt of theories, which is. Thus, the cynic might argue, jobs are protected by debates over what, in the end are peripheral matters, whilst the hard core remains untouched. Eventually, however, refutation cannot be contained any longer and a shift occurs. Thus the statement that 'all swans are white' is proved to be incorrect, no matter how many times the 'establishment' argues that the black swans observed are simply immature, or oil-coated white ones, or not swans at all.

One thing is clear: a paradigm shift involves considerable turmoil, which is why existing structures are held on to so vigorously. For, whilst members of the previously dominant college enjoyed jobs, promotions and status, once they are shown to have held on to false notions, retirements and exclusions become common and even their past work may be held up to ridicule.

9.4 Towards a 'New Economics': some methodological developments

If it is true that economics is experiencing the trauma associated with a paradigm shift, what is the failing paradigm? Writing over sixty years ago, Lord Robbins described economics as "the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses" (Robbins, 1935: 16). Such a definition has obvious attractions: to the economist it satisfies the need to be seen as scientific; arguably it reaches to the core concept of the subject, opportunity cost; and to the uninitiated it provides access to a subject which is otherwise largely unintelligible.

Unfortunately it also serves as a justification for positive economics and hence drives a wedge between ethics and economics; the distinction between ends and means enforces a separation between the two. Robbins was the first economist writing under the influence of logical positivism. Thus, he argued that economics should not be concerned with the more equal distribution of income and wealth or the desired ends of preserving the natural beauty of a local area. Rather it should deal with rational decision-making to maximise utility within certain constraints. For Robbins, economic analysis should be *Wertfrei* or value free; there is no place for *ought*, just

is. Moral issues are "outside interests" for economics, because they fall beyond the scope of rational discussion.

Sen (1987) identified two different origins of economics. On the one hand there is an ethics-related tradition going back to Aristotle. On the other there is the "engineering" approach concerned with logistic issues rather than ultimate ends. Robbins' definition is nearer to the latter. It is Sen's belief that "the nature of modern Economics has been substantially impoverished by the distance that has grown between economics and ethics" (Sen, 1987: 7).

As philosophers, Hausman and McPherson (1994) looked in at the subject from the outside. They suggested that Robbin's attachment to rationality as a core concept for economics was, ironically, an adherence to a normative notion. As they stated, "one *ought* to be rational, one is foolish or mistaken if one is not rational." (Hausman and McPherson 1994: 260. Emphasis added). They even hinted that in practice this represented a fragment of moral theory "lurking" within the core of positive economics. Economists should care about moral questions for four reasons. First, the behaviour of economic agents is influenced by their moral views. Economics outcomes may thus be shaped by morality. Second, welfare economics is based on strong and contestable moral presuppositions and so any advance in this field will require attention to morality. Third, moral commitments drive public policy and the economist needs to understand these moral commitments. Fourth, positive and normative economics are frequently intermingled. The social principles behind positive economics need to be understood (Hausman and McPherson, 1993).

9.5 Economics in schools

Whilst economics may induct students into empirical and mathematical knowledge, it is unlikely that moral reasoning - one of the seven forms of knowledge Hirst (1974) outlined - will attract the same attention. What does it suggest when a top grade A-level candidate can argue in positive terms about economic growth - building a new motorway - but has not developed a moral seriousness about its consequences - the impact upon an area's natural beauty?

As we saw in chapter three, it is an aim of the National Curriculum that there should be the "promotion of the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society." (DES, 1989). It could be argued that economics, with its rational self-interest, actually undermines the moral aim. Perhaps

introducing ethics would give something back to counteract the accusations that Marwell and Ames (1981) make that economists tend to pursue their individual goals and are therefore less willing to collaborate? Could it be that a new economics that embraced ethics would make a more rounded subject for a more rounded student?

Unfortunately, the "impoverishment" described by Sen (1987) has permeated economics syllabuses from their introduction fifty years ago. Even today the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) (now QCA) requires all new ones seeking approval from 1998 to have as one of their aims:

"to....(h) develop students' understanding of the purpose of abstraction and resulting simplification associated with economic models, together with an ability to appraise economic models and methods of economic enquiry." (SCAA, 1997: 2)

Furthermore,

"Students should understand:

- that any point on the production possibility curve is productively efficient, but that allocative efficiency is only achieved when goods and services produced match people's preferences." (ibid.: 4)

But, as Lawson (1997: 279) argues, what is the use of a subject that deals with drug abuse in terms of 'preferences', if indeed such a topic even rates a mention, without acknowledging the complicated ethical, societal and environmental issues that are bound up with such decisions? It is the lack of reality, the subject's irrelevance to young people's daily lives, which sits at the heart of students' disillusionment. Economics should be able to describe what we observe, but also to recognise that we are critical players within that reality.

It has been suggested that it is the 'scientism' of A-level economics that makes it dismal (Whitehead, 1985). Likewise Buchanan (1992), argued that guarding against too much normative content is hardly appropriate for students at an age where they are in the process of actively clarifying their personal standards and structures to make sense of their world. To play down values and ethical concerns is to deprive them of the fuller picture they need.

Piderit (1993) drew an analogy between values as public goods. He concluded that a person becomes more human by participation in values, or to stretch the analogy "by

consuming the public good" (Piderit, 1993: 53). In an approach taken from natural law, he identified seven fundamental values, and constructed a system of appraising economics in ethical terms. To a 16-19 year-old student, who is searching for a values dimension in a rapidly changing economic world, a syllabus with a greater ethical emphasis should be both more relevant and more meaningful.

Etzioni (1988) proposed a wholesale shift from the positivist neo-classical to what he termed an 'I and we' paradigm. This emphasised the social context of economic behaviour - contrasting the 'I' of the neo-classical system with the 'we' required to overcome excessive self-interest. Furthermore he imputed moral commitments into the determination of economic behaviour. 'Rational' choice can, and often is made on the basis of emotions and value judgements, and indeed such judgements are often pivotal. In his call for a 'deontological Social Science' he focused on the importance of ends, and in stark contrast to Robbins, actively called for the inclusion of a moral dimension. Hence the subtitle of his book: "Towards a New Economics" (Etzioni: 1988).

9.6 The 'New Economics' and the EBEA's 16 - 19 Project

The term 'New Economics' can carry a number of different meanings depending on one's perspective. The *New Economics Foundation* carries the slogan of 'Working for a Just and Sustainable Economy' and, by putting ethics back into economic life, justified using the word "new" (Boyce, 1993). Lewis and Warneryd (1994) presented a 'New Economics' that was summarised variously as "more social (less reductionist), more realistic, more socially responsible, less positive, more holistic" (Lewis and Warneryd 1994: 371). Finally, the EBEA's 16-19 project for 'A' level Economics, which was set up to improve the status and teaching of the subject (McCormick & Vidler, 1994) also used the term 'New Economics'.

In setting the scene for the 16-19 project, Thomas (1992) examined the 'A' level debate and summarised it as falling into four areas of concern:

"The abstract nature of Economics as it is taught 16-19; the inaccessibility of its concepts and models, the lack of opportunities for application and its positive methodology." (Thomas, 1992: 81)

Methodology remains a particular concern. The positive view of science is that scientific knowledge is value free, is based on empirical observation and testing and

that it enables prediction of the external world to occur (Mulberg, 1995). Of all the social sciences, economics has heavily subscribed to the positivist methodology. Thus, given certain assumptions, the price and output decisions of a firm under perfect competition can be predicted by following that market's model. The result is very positive and thus no doubt satisfying. However, the fact that it is highly abstracted from the real world, involves excessive 'neo-classical geometry' and does not 'explain' modern business behaviour is not lost on students between the ages of 16 and 19: for some it appears as theory for theory sake. The subject's detached, objective analysis does not permit an opportunity to raise increasing concerns about what the goals of a firm *should* be (instead of the assumed profit maximisation); what might be wrong with monopoly power (instead of its description as 'market failure'); or whether business is, or should be accountable to government and consumers (instead of simply driven by 'market forces').

This rather sterile aspect of positive methodology is also exemplified in textbooks. Following a survey of eight 'A' level texts, Lee concluded that:

"The treatment of 'economic man' (*sic*) in the typical textbook tends to be brief fragmented, narrow and rather superficial." (Lee 1986: 95)

He urged that there should be an attempt to put the heart back into 'economic man' by focusing on the ethical side of decision-making in economics (*ibid.*: 92-95).

In the EBEA's 16-19 discussion papers, written before the content of the core text was finalised (EBEA, 1995), there were suggestions about altering syllabuses in order to provide an opportunity to incorporate more ethical concerns. Jacobs (1993) presented "a new paradigm for the 21st century" that he termed "Spiritual Economics." Beardshaw *et. al.* (1993) favoured a political economy that would encourage contending perspectives, whilst Harcourt (1994) put forward proposals on how to introduce alternative approaches in economics. However, none of these views was adopted in the production of the 16-19 core text (*op. cit.*) Whilst it contains an implied criticism of the positive methodology in economics, there is no attempt to make the 'New Economics' adopt an original methodological perspective. Instead, the emphasis on 'new' comes from teaching and learning theory. For instance, one concept that is highlighted is that of "economic thoughtfulness" (Thomas, 1996). Adapted from Newmann, there is an emphasis on the need to "consider an appropriate balance between the development of in-depth knowledge, favourable dispositions and appropriate skills" (McCormick & Vidler, 1994: 33).

The absence of ethical considerations, however, denies an element that is crucial for true economic thoughtfulness. For example, Root (1993) suggested that:

"The policy syllogism is in the following form:

1. A causes B
2. B is desirable
3. Do A." (Root 1993: 108)

Premise one is a statement of means, premise two a statement of ends, and from these two premises the policy maker can decide what to do. In Robbin's terms premise two should never be considered. But surely economic thoughtfulness should find room for an evaluation of why B may be desirable? It may, after all, be barely disguised utilitarianism (see chapter eight).

To be more concrete, premise one could be the relationship between a minimum wage (A) and unemployment (B). Premise two could be that unemployment is not desirable. What is economic thoughtfulness if it does not recognise the values, consider the ethics and evaluate possible policy as a consequence of the introduction of a minimum wage - an issue of particular relevance to many sixth formers today? Most students will encounter similar topics in their classrooms, but they are not encouraged to investigate the ethical stances and underlying philosophical positions of the arguments, neither are they rewarded for developing a moral economic thoughtfulness for themselves.

The 'New Economics' of the 16-19 project has not incorporated the ethics that makes other 'New Economics' new. To do so involves considerable attention to the methodology of the subject and a desire to understand how "positivism has permeated the self-understanding of the social sciences" (Habermas, 1972: 303). It is no longer acceptable to have "an amoral study of amoral agents in a market"; trying to treat subjects as if they were silent on matters of moral value (Root, 1993: 108).

9.8 The 'New Economics' and the Nuffield Economics & Business Project

As we saw in chapter five, one of the objectives of the Nuffield Economics and Business Project was to bring together economics and business studies into one coherent course (Wall *et. al.*, 1996a). It has a number of 'strands' or longitudinal themes which run through the course, one of which being ethics (Wall *et. al.*, 1996b). Unfortunately, the difficulties involved in constructing syllabus content, writing

resources and providing INSET meant that these 'strands' were perhaps not given the attention they deserved. An alternative view might be that the course was already requiring so many new and different approaches that adding one or several more, by way of strands, was an unrealistic expectation. However, in creating the Nuffield course there was at least a history of introducing ethics into business courses to draw on, if not into single-subject economics (Callahan, 1980; Hosner, 1988; Solomon, 1992; McDonald & Donleavy, 1995). As a result, combining economics and business into one course allowed scope for a similar infusion.

Set out in a core of four stages and six options, the course raises specific questions for students to investigate (Wall, 1996b). Within these questions there are some that explicitly involve ethics and others that provide scope for the development of ethical reflection.

For instance, one of the units within Stage One, *Objectives* is 'What should the State provide?' This is an ethical question and the accompanying text (Wall, 1994) with its supporting classroom materials present a rigorous treatment of the positive/normative distinction within this context. In Stage Two, 'Efficiency' raises moral concerns, and the question 'Do markets work?' could be assessed in terms of ethical outcomes, although this is not made explicit. A guidance note in the syllabus on this question stipulates: "An investigation of how the market works and ways in which it fails to provide outcomes society finds acceptable." (ULEAC, 1996: 20). But the ways in which society determines desired outcomes is the essence of solid choice theory, and this has had a major impact on contemporary moral philosophy. This background is not supplied in the course. The final two Stages in the core do not raise specific ethical questions, although within 'Why Trade?' much can be discussed on the "Impact of trade on welfare" (*ibid.*: 21).

The first option, focusing on Development Economics, provides scope for moral reflection (see chapter ten). Its title, 'Is inequality inevitable?' pivots on a sense of the rights and wrongs of poverty and equality. Similarly within Option 4, 'Who has power in the market?', the underlying concept is efficiency and its moral implications. The question 'Is business accountable?' (Option 6) also requires a study of business ethics.

This is a course, and the syllabus that supports it, which requires ethical issues to be raised and tackled. Certainly it was the intention of those of us who framed it that it should be so. Indeed, with a scheme of assessment involving portfolio work as well

as final examinations, there is ample opportunity for students to take up ethical concerns in their independent research.

With such possibilities, is the Nuffield course the answer to a 'New Economics'? Certainly it places a value on values and raises ethical questions. But it did not set out to be a 'New Economics' and neither is it, in the sense suggested in the previous sections. First, although currently one of the three routes through it yields an A-level in economics, the design of the course inevitably skews the economics content more towards business than would conventionally be the case. Furthermore, the single subject route is likely to disappear, leaving only the combined one. This will give Nuffield a clearer market identity, although it may discourage those who opted for it as a 'different' route to an A-level in economics (Coates, 1998).

Second it does not purposely signpost ethics, and it is possible to overlook the ethical dimension if the teacher is not suitably focused. In particular, as was touched upon in chapter eight, there is an absence of a theoretical base for evaluating the potential ethical issues that arise. To answer the question, 'What should the State provide?' requires a concept of human well-being which in moral theory will encompass notions of freedom, rights, equality and justice. To ensure that such notions are raised, a more radical re-write of the syllabus would be necessary and it is to this possibility that we now turn.

9.9 Ways forward

The most ambitious approach to change would be to incorporate Etzioni's (1988) 'I and we' paradigm, built around the core assumptions that:

- "(i) Actors pursue utility and a desire to follow their moral commitments.
- (ii) Actors make choices based largely on values and emotions.
- (iii) Actors act within collectivities and should not be seen as free-standing persons." (Etzioni, 1988: 254)

It is unlikely that such a radical change, amounting as it is to a paradigm shift, could be achieved within a traditional syllabus. Of course that makes it all the more attractive in some senses, but perhaps a compromise solution would be more effective, at least during transition.

For instance, a syllabus could be written along the lines put forward by Hausman and McPherson (1996), and their book used to introduce moral concepts into economic analysis. By so doing, notions such as rationality, welfare, efficiency, and economic justice could be injected into the A-level Economics core (SCAA, 1997). Two brief examples of how this might be done, follow.

The economics core sets out a view of the economy at a system of inter-related markets which under certain assumptions will allocate resources efficiently. There are two key market distortions - monopolies and externalities. But there is no attention to market morality. Increasingly this area has received attention from writers such as the 1998 economics Nobel Prize winner, Sen (1987), Brittan (1994) and Hutton (1996). All of these authors suggest that the market fails if it does not provide ethical outcomes that most people would recognise as acceptable.

The contrast between attitudes to the factor market as opposed to the product market illustrates the point. Friedman (1953, 1970), the doyen of free market economists, suggests that the minimum wage debate should be cleared of any values and analysed in characteristically detached, objective and positive ways. Only then can one develop the "correct" policy. But for Hausman and McPherson, this is a sterile approach:

"But notice how much is left out of the economic analysis. Being unemployed (because of higher labour costs as a result of a minimum wage) involves not just a lower income, but a loss of *status* and *self-esteem*. To what extent does unemployment deprive individuals of the opportunity for education, *self-expression* and growth? Similarly, the size of one's wage influences not only one's ability to consume, but also one's *self-respect*. Below a certain level, wages may not be sufficient to provide for one's *needs*. What sort of rights do individuals have to employment at *decent* wages? To add these values (as many individual economists already do in conversation and teaching though rarely in print) requires that economists grasp the italicised moral concepts."

(Hausman and McPherson, 1994: 254-255. Emphasis and parenthesis in original)

Friedman's position only serves to alienate many sixth form students for whom experience of Saturday jobs makes the minimum wage debate a very real issue. It is unlikely that university lecturers and school teachers will be directly and personally

concerned with the possible impact of a minimum wage of £2.50 per hour as opposed to one of £3.00. They will probably have a position, underpinned by their own experiences, education and values, depending on whether, to take the two extremes, they believe those who argue that the higher figure will result in unemployment, or those who see it as a way of relieving poverty for the least well off in society. Sixth formers, doing the same job on a Saturday alongside others earning considerably more, will almost certainly have a different view of the debate. That is not to say it will be better, their lack of theoretical knowledge and understanding of the wider implications means that it will almost certainly be shallower and based on self-interest, but there is no point in trying to 'force' different values on to those who are not ready for them. It is necessary to start from the perspective of a shelf-stacking sixth form student and then attempt to persuade him or her that there are other, wider considerations, than to pretend that such an original position does not exist. In other words it is necessary for values, levels of maturity and content to be 'congruent' before one can open values up to critical debate. In the case of economics, simply pushing aside the moral concepts raised by Hausman and McPherson is to confirm Whitehead's dismal scientism (Whitehead, 1985: 72).

A further example of the values debate concerns government intervention in markets. The objectives of such intervention can be analysed in terms of four moral themes. An answer to the question: 'What should the State provide?' might take the form:

- "that which provides happiness to the greatest number" i.e. - Utilitarianism and a focus on individual well-being; or
- "that which respects individual rights" - libertarianism and a focus on the value of freedom; or
- "that which attempts to produce greater equality" - egalitarianism and a focus on equality to bring well being; or
- that which attempts to produce justice through an idea of a solid contract - contractualism and a "welfarist" focus.

It is possible to see with this approach the kind of structured thinking which was suggested in the previous chapter, but in a clearly subject-specific context. Of course the generalised statements made above would need to be made concrete through examples. One way of doing this might be through the debate over the provision of state or private pensions. Hutton (1996) argues that pensions are the state's responsibility. He is dismayed at the growing need for people to arrange their pensions through the market, which to him is a "lottery of accumulating stocks and shares rather than a proper measure of redistributive taxation" (Hutton 1996: 308).

His strong sense of economic justice and his outline of a theory of stakeholder capitalism touches on contractualism. It is his passionate blend of ethics and economics and his concern for market morality that has made his book *The State We're In* a best seller and his name an increasing favourite among A-level students. For them to avoid the prospect of the dismal future hinted at by Hutton, they need to study a modern science - one that brings together economics and ethics.

9.10 Conclusion

Economics appears to stand at the cross-road. On the one hand the evidence clearly points to a subject that has lost its market. I argue that this is the result of a lack of 'curriculum congruence', brought about by the current methodology and an avoidance of ethical values, as well as by a failure to accept the differing levels of maturity of those learning the subject.

On the other hand, and at a pragmatic level, the possibility of A-level and GNVQ business subjects combining may create a 'curriculum window' for economics. More philosophically, the introduction of an ethical dimension alongside the SCAA core would allow the creation of a genuinely 'New Economics' appropriate to the needs of the twenty-first century. It will provide the scope to evaluate the moral dimensions of the market system and by so doing it may partly address the serious gap in moral teaching that Lawson (1997) identifies. Is it fanciful to see what could be a curious reversal: the hard-nosed and self-interested economics syllabus becoming dynamic and popular because it integrates moral reflection into positive and normative economic analysis? This popularity would arise from addressing the double agenda of a gap in the National Curriculum (Lawton, 1996) as well as in the discipline.

Positive economics has been under attack for some time, numbers have declined over decades, and the image of the dismal science, paramount. More controversially the role of economists, and in particular the monetarists in what some saw as their amoral (normative?) attitude towards money and society in the 1980s, projected a harsh and unpopular image, which some economists have been slow to address. Twenty years ago Lawrence Senesh in his address to the Joint Council on Economic Education and the National Association of Affiliated Economic education directors in the United States said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, if you want our youth to invent a better future than the present trends indicate, you have to introduce Adam

Smith, not only as a scientist, but also as a professor of moral philosophy." (Senesh, 1978)

It is unfortunate that his advice has, up to now, been ignored. Whether it will in the future remains to be seen, but it will require a new generation of teachers to bring this about.

9.11 References

Ableson, P. (1996) "Declining Enrolments in Economics: the Australian experience", in *Royal Economics Newsletter*, October.

Beardshaw, J., Gavin, M., and Ross, A. (1993) "Back to the Future: The case for political Economy" in *Economics education 16-19 project. Working paper 3*, Economics Association.

Beauchamp, T.L. and Bowie, N.E. (Eds.) (1993, 4th edition) *Ethical Theory and Business*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Blaug, M. (1992) *The Methodology of Economics*, 2nd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boyce, D. (1993) *What is New Economics?* London: New Economics Foundation.

Brittan, S., and Hamlin, A. (1994) *Market Capitalism and Moral Values*, Edward Elgar.

Brue, S. L. (1996) *Controversy and Change in the American economics curriculum*, Paper presented at the Pacific Rim Allied Economic Organisation Conference, Hong Kong.

Buchanan, J. M. (1992) "Economics in the post-Socialist century" in Hey, J. D. (Ed.) *The Future of Economics*, Royal Economic Society, Blackwell.

Callahan, D. (1980) "Goals in the teaching of ethics" in Callahan, D., and Bok, S. (Eds.) *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education*, New York: Plenum Press.

- Callahan, D. and Bok, S. (Eds.) (1980) *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education*, New York: Plenum Press.
- Coates, G., Hurd, S., and Anderton, A. (1998) *Nuffield Economics and Business A-level: An Evaluation of Curriculum Integration*, Staffordshire University.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1989) *National curriculum: From Policy to Practice*, London: DES.
- (EBEA) Economics and Business Education Association (1995) *Core Economics*, Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Etzioni, A. (1988) *The Moral Dimension: Towards a New Economics*, New York: Tree Press.
- Friedman, M. (1953) "The Methodology of Positive Economics" in *Essays in Positive Economics*, University of Chicago Press.
- Friedman, M. (1970) "The Social Responsibility of Business is to increase its profits." in New York Times Magazine, September 13, 1970 reprinted in Beauchamp, T. L. and Bowie, N. E. (Eds.) (1993) *Ethical Theory and Business*, (4th edn) New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Green, F. (1998) "Can economics stem a drop in interest rates?" in *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, October 30. p.4.
- Habermas, J. (1972) *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Heinemann.
- Harcourt, G. (1994) "Essential ingredients of alternative approaches in the 'A' level syllabus" in McCormick, B., and Vidler, C. *Teaching and Learning the New Economics*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Hausman, D.M. (Ed.) (1994 2nd edition) *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hausman, D. M., and McPherson, M. S. (1993) "Taking ethics seriously: Economics and Contemporary moral philosophy" in *Journal of Economic literature*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, June, pp. 671-731.

- Hausman, D. M., and McPherson, M. S. (1994) "Economics, rationality and ethics" in Hausman, D. M. (Ed.) *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*, 2nd edition, Cambridge: CUP.
- Hausman, D. M., and McPherson, M. S. (1996) *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy*, Cambridge: CUP.
- Hey, J.D. (Ed.) (1992) *The Future of Economics*, Royal Economic Society, Blackwell.
- Hirst, P. H. (1974) *Knowledge and the Curriculum*, London: Routledge.
- Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) (1996) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Hoogendijk, W. (1991) *The Economic Revolution*, Green Print.
- Hosner, L. T. (1988) "The other 388: Why a majority of our schools of Business Administration do not offer a course in Business Ethics" in *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 4 pp. 17-22.
- Hutton, W. (1996) *The State We're In*, London: Vintage.
- Jacobs, A. (1993) "The New Economics: a new Paradigm for the 21st Century" *Economics education 16-19 project. Working paper 2*, Economics Association.
- Kuhn, T. (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* 2nd edition, University of Chicago Press.
- Lakatos, I. (1970) *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press.
- Lawson, T. (1997) *Economics and Reality*, London: Routledge.
- Lawton, D. (1996) "The Changing context: the National Curriculum" in Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Lee, N. (1986) "Putting the heart back into Economic man" in *Economics*, Autumn, pp. 92-95.

Levacic, R. (1987) "What Changes Should be made to the A-level Syllabuses for the 1990s?" in *Economics*, XXIV, No. 4, Winter.

Lewis, A. and Warneryd, K. (Eds.) (1994) *Ethics and Economics Affairs*, London: Routledge.

Lines, D. R. (1997) "What's the Big Idea" in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 4 April. Economics and Business Supplement: 11.

Marwell, G. and Ames, R. (1981) "Economists free note: Does anyone else?" in *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 15, No. 3, June, pp. 295-310.

McCormick, B. and Vidler, C. (1994) *Teaching and Learning the New Economics*, London: Heinemann.

McDonald, G. M., and Donleavy, G. D. (1995) "Objections to the Teaching of Business Ethics" in *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 14, pp. 839-853

Mulberg, J. (1995) *Social limits for Economics theory*, Routledge.

Munday, S. (1996) *Current Developments in Economics*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

Ormorod, P. (1994) *The Death of Economics*, London: Faber and Faber.

Owensby, W. (1988) *Economics for Prophets*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company.

Piderit, J. J. (1993) *The Ethical Foundations of Economics*, Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Pisanie, J. A. (1997) "Declining Enrolments in Economics" in *Royal Economics Society Newsletter*, March.

Popper, K. (1959) *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Harper Torchbooks.

Robbins, L. (1935) *An essay on the Nature and significance of Economic Science* (2nd edition), London: Macmillan.

- Root, M. (1993) *Philosophy of Social Science*, Blackwell.
- (SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1996) *GCE Results Analysis*, London: SCAA.
- (SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1997) *GCE Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary Examinations Subject Core for Economics*, London: SCAA.
- Sen, A. (1987) *On Ethics and Economics*, London: Blackwell.
- Senesh, L. (1978) "Hopes and Frustrations of an Economics Educator" address to the Joint Council on Economic Education and the National Association of Affiliated Economic education directors in the United States, reproduced in the Journal of Economics Educators. Fall: Insert.
- Solomon, R. C. (1992) *Ethics and excellence: Co-operation and integrity in Business*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thomas, L. (1992) "The Economics Education Project: Setting the scene" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVIII, Summer.
- Thomas, L. (1996) "Promoting Economic Thoughtfulness" in Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Turner, R. K., Pearce, D., and Pateman, I. (1994) *Environmental Economics*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- (ULEAC) University of London Examinations and Assessment Council, (1996) *Syllabuses 8127, 9125, 9126, 9127 for May/June 1998*, ULEAC.
- Wall, N. (Ed.) (1994) *Nuffield Economic and Business Student's Book*, Harlow: Longman.
- Wall, N., Barnes S., & Wales, J. (1996a) "Nuffield Economics and Business: Making Change Happen in the Classroom, 1991-95" in Walstad, W.B., (Ed) *Secondary Economics and Business Education. New Developments in the United Kingdom, United States and Other Nations*, London: Economics and Business Education Association.

Wall, N., Barnes, S., Wales, J., and Lines, D. (1996) "Economics and business at A-level: An Integrated Approach" in Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.

Walstad, W. B. (Ed.) (1996) *Secondary Economics and Business Education. New Developments in the United Kingdom, United States and Other Nations*, London: Economics and Business Education Association.

Whitehead, D. J. (1985) "Values in Economics teaching" in Atkinson, G. B. J. (Ed.) *Teaching Economics*, Heinemann.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

The conclusion provides brief summaries of each of the chapters, emphasising their particular relevance to values, curriculum content and the developing young person, which I call curriculum 'congruence'. It is argued that these issues have been neglected by curriculum designers in the past but that they are fundamental to successful curriculum innovation and should therefore receive greater attention in the future. The thesis ends with a discussion of the challenges and opportunities that the teaching of values in a business education context offers, drawing on the evidence presented in earlier chapters.

10.2 Part One

In part one the formal curriculum was defined as a vehicle used by society for "passing on" particular knowledge, skills and values to the next generation. Any curriculum development carries a responsibility to recognise the importance of the values that it imparts, at the same time accepting that there can be no such thing as a value-free curriculum, since choices about what to include and what not to; the degree of emphasis on one part of the syllabus rather than another; the extent and depth of analysis required of students and so on, all involve some kind of value judgement. This research investigates whether and to what extent such recognition exists. Economics and business provide a focus because of their particular nature and the values that they embody and seek to project. Later, in section 10.5, I summarise what I believe some of those underlying values are.

10.3 Part Two

Part two analysed five curriculum initiatives, two that were centrally planned - the 1988 National Curriculum, and GNVQ; two that were the result of personal initiatives - BIS, and the Nuffield Economics and Business Project, and one a qualification set by an independent awarding body - the ICAEW. Taken together the analysis spans a period

of chronological development spanning the age of fourteen through to people in their mid to late twenties.

A number of important themes are raised through the analysis of the projects. Of primary significance is the disjointed, perhaps esoteric manner in which the curriculum developments took place. Although there can be little doubt that they were all created with the intention of raising educational standards, their underpinning values and philosophies led to different conclusions about how that should be achieved. Thus the 1988 National Curriculum (chapter three) reflected a view that over the period of formal education *subjects* held the key to creating a fully rounded, mature individual. Yet the National Curriculum's introduction, made hurriedly partly to stifle deeper debate, was the response to a largely political agenda. In this sense perhaps, its values were clear, but it made little reference to the principles and practices of curriculum construction which had been increasingly enunciated and enacted up to that time. As a result the National Curriculum's values, such as the predominantly Anglo-centred view of history and literature and its disregard for 'new' subjects such as economics and business studies, were not 'congruent' with the ones that a multi-racial, multi-ethnic contemporary British society recognised and desired to be 'passed on'. Largely because of this, as well as for purely practical reasons, the 1988 National Curriculum has been modified fundamentally from its original form and continues to be the subject of change.

Business and Information Studies (chapter four) was the outcome of a small group of people who recognised that curriculum change was needed and set about effecting it, but in an instrumental and essentially pragmatic way. As well as a concern for the subject matter, interpreted from a largely technicist viewpoint, their values centred on pedagogy. This demanded the intensive retraining of teachers both in the technical skills required by Information Technology and for their new roles as facilitators. But at the same time there was a recognition that 14-16 year-olds were and are changing and maturing faster. This is seen in a number of areas: superficially in their desire to be called 'students' and not pupils. But they are also physically bigger, reach puberty at a younger age, have greater spending power than past generations and so on. Thus, a course that ostensibly transferred responsibility on to the learner was entirely in keeping with the students' views of themselves. Combine that with the acquisition of IT skills which are perceived as the *sine qua non* of the twenty-first century and the values underpinning BIS and imparted in the classroom can be seen as largely 'congruent' with those of both the students and their parents. For this reason BIS at GCSE was an immediate success in terms of take-up.

How then can we explain the relative lack of success of BIS beyond Key Stage 4? The answer lies in the way in which the values of the course, which remained constant, failed to take account of the changing students at a later and different state of schooling. By the time young people have reached post-compulsory education, the majority are more independent, outward looking and less egotistical. They also recognise that IT skills are tools rather than ends in themselves. Indeed, those of that age group who sit at computers for hours on end are often subject to ridicule rather than being objects of admiration. Furthermore, the litmus test for success at A-level is altogether more cerebral. As the introduction of GNVQ demonstrates, the greater the vocational element in an advanced level course, the lower its esteem. Because A-level BIS continued to project the values of its 14-16 counterpart, and these did not sit with those of the 16-19 cohort, it failed to attract large numbers at that level.

Although there were many other competing objectives, the co-directors of the Nuffield Economics and Business Project (chapter five) put the consideration of values and the maturing student at the heart of their curriculum development. Through their own experiences, backgrounds and education as well as personal research, they formed the view that environmental and ethical issues were the ones that would interest and excite the 16-19 cohort, especially in the context of economics and business. They believed that the economic mantras of the 1980s had let society down, and that this was one of the main reasons why economics, in particular, was losing its place in the curriculum. Another was the way the subject was taught, with scant regard for the intellectual maturity of students. Unfortunately, the realities of text-book writing, assessment scheme creation and in-service training meant that more practical and mundane issues tended to crowd-out theorising; a danger in any curriculum development. This is borne out in the research on the Project's first two years in schools, which suggests that it has not altered the teaching and learning of the subjects in the way its creators hoped.

It is only possible to offer tentative reasons why a radical change has not as yet, been achieved. It may simply be because the Project attempted too much, or because there was too little effective in-service training, especially in the use of a spiral curriculum designed to exploit the developing mind; or it may be because commercial and other pressures left insufficient time for considered reflection on the range of issues which were being tackled. It may also be that the values guiding the actions and decisions of the directors failed to find sufficient engagement with the needs of pupils or, more likely at this early stage in the Project's life, with those of the teachers, especially if they are the economists whose values are those of the 1980s and early 1990s. Of these

alternatives the last seems the most likely, and it does offer hope for the future. Not only are the values of the Nuffield Project explicit, which allows and indeed encourages an open and free choice, they are also deliberately designed to appeal to and challenge students learning economics and business in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Thus, questions such as "What should the State Provide?", "Can we control the Economy?" and "Who has power in the market?" offer Nuffield students the opportunity to express their dissonance with the way society attempts to order things, if that is how they feel, as much as an acceptance of the *status quo*. Only time will tell if such 'congruence' with the needs, aspirations and values of students has in fact been achieved.

General National Vocational Qualifications (chapter six) were designed as a separate 'track' or 'pathway' between vocational and academic courses, but they are seen in many schools and colleges as a somewhat poor substitutes for A-levels. Like the 1988 National Curriculum, GNVQs were hurriedly introduced, but unlike it they were aimed, initially, at the post-compulsory age range. Another difference, and a significant one, is that they were designed by a semi-autonomous government body responsible for vocational qualifications, the NCVQ. This lent them a particular, but implicit or hidden values position, since they were built around the notion of competence testing, which, its advocates argue, is value-free. Thus the original GNVQ Business specification contained virtually no reference to values; but they existed nevertheless. The hegemony of the market underpinned the course, alongside certain assumptions about the role of firms within society and the profit motive, but by not being explicit, such values were not subject to analysis and evaluation by students. The course therefore projected an instrumental view of education; one to do with acceptance rather than challenge, one where deep thinking and understanding, of meta-cognition, were not appreciated. This lack of critical awareness, alongside a raft of other more practical shortcomings, resulted in GNVQ Business changing over time, at each stage introducing a greater sensitivity to issues pertaining to values. Significantly, as the assumptions have been brought increasingly into the open they have changed, so that where once the profit motive was not questioned, now students are asked to look at the costs as well as the benefits of unbridled capitalism.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants' examinations are becoming less popular, which challenges their status as one of the UK's premier business qualifications. Here, the lack of specific aims creates an air of uncertainty about their function, which is compounded as the world of business adjusts to the realities of globalisation and the information and communication revolution. The examinations seem simply to serve as

a selecting device and thus reveal a lack of 'congruence', in that intellectual development is not valued, other than by a limited acceptance that prior learning allows exemption from some parts of the examination. At the same time the values of being a Chartered Accountant, such as conservatism and a emphasis on tangible evidence, appear as 'givens' and are not challenged. Taken together this results in an assessment regime which encourages didactic teaching and rote learning. Altogether it is a sterile system designed, it seems, more as a hurdle or barrier to entry than as a fulfilling educational experience.

10.4 Part Three

In reflecting upon the lessons learnt from the curriculum initiatives described above, one was struck by the consistent way in which the consideration of values was found to be a useful method to critique how economics and business is handled at various levels. However, it was felt that the analysis of past curriculum developments offered few indications of possible ways forward in the future. This led to the investigations in part three.

Here the dissertation examined two distinct but connected areas: thinking skills and the decline of economics as a school subject. The common link to each of these investigations was the centrality of values and their consideration in the design and application of future curricular work, which would take seriously the issue of the developing young person.

The first investigation (chapter eight) suggested that given the fundamental nature of values in the curriculum, it was necessary to equip learners with the intellectual tools or *thinking skills* that would enable students to recognise and evaluate those values which, either implicitly or explicitly, were projected by a subject. Thus the implied values of the original GNVQ Business specification would become explicit as learners become equipped with the wherewithal to question them. Furthermore, although the focus of the research was business education, the tentative conclusions were that students can benefit across a range of subjects. It was also considered important that when designing a scheme of work to include thinking skills, that the development of the learner should be considered so that difficult philosophical concepts could be understood by different age groups. However, if undertaken strategically and sensitively the result would be a more critical evaluation of the values students encounter in both the formal and informal curriculum.

The second investigation (chapter nine) took a specific case study, economics. It was argued that through the use of apparently "value free" positivism, the subject is failing to address the really big ethical issues such as inequality, the arms trade, premature deaths, environmental degradation, female exploitation and so on; the very subjects which especially concern many young people. This suggests that one reason for the waning popularity of school economics is to do with the values underpinning and projected by the subject, and its inability to engage with the urgent topics of the day in a way that young people find convincing and challenging. This implies in turn that unless curriculum developers take changing values into account, certain subjects will fade from the curriculum whilst others, more in tune with the perceived needs of the times in terms of, for example, preparing students for adult life, will take their place.

10.5 Discussion

The thesis has, amongst other things, presented a case for the inclusion of business education in the school curriculum, but a particular and quite specific form of business education, one that presents issues of values at its core. I have argued that the social, political and economic context surrounding maturing young people will influence and affect their values base, and as a consequence that teachers and the curriculum in general, have a responsibility to help them to make *their own* sense of it. Thus, for instance, the monetarist theory upon which so much policy decision-making was based in the early 1980s needed to be explained in classrooms and its likely consequences subject to investigation and debate. After all, the strict adherence to Friedmanite policies resulted, as we saw in chapter three, in schools being starved of resources in an attempt to keep public expenditure under control.

Of course most subjects claim to help students make sense of their world; it is just that business educators assert a special relevance, given the increasing dominance of a single economic system since the end of the cold war. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, when a competing economic paradigm existed, it was possible for students to see that alternatives were, at least in theory, feasible. Now the apparent pre-eminence of a particular form of capitalism, with its emphasis on the role and importance of the market and the price mechanism, as exemplified by footloose multinationals and near or actual monopolies operating in spheres once organised and run by the State, suggests that there is no alternative. Such a view may be reinforced if a curriculum development, such as GNVQ (chapter six), similarly assumes 'givens' in a business

context. Far from being the norm, profit maximisation is rarely a genuine business objective: survival, growth, even maximising company directors incomes are all much more evident in the real-world. Making sweeping generalisations about the aims and purposes of business is as imprecise and misleading as any other 'self-evident' truth placed in front of students.

In chapter eight, Kate's response (page 211) to my A-level essay question on business ethics was, "Whoever wrote this question does not understand what ethics are." Considering my age, experience and education, this was a significant statement to be made by a seventeen year-old, but of course she was right. For many years I had been setting questions, writing texts and teaching students about business ethics, in what can only be described as a 'careless' way. Not care-less in the sense that I did not care, but simply that I had not been exposed to deeper aspects of ethics education and ethical thinking that a philosophical perspective brings. That is not, in my view, an argument for the inclusion of philosophy in the mainstream curriculum, since the degree of abstraction required makes its appeal limited to the majority of students. What I am saying, and this is the argument advanced in chapter eight, is that examining and evaluating business actions needs to be done in a more thorough and considered way than is often the case in many business education classrooms; in other words in a way that has been described in the field of environmental education as 'morally careful' (Lambert, 1999). As the evidence in chapter five (the Nuffield Project) shows, however, achieving it is certainly as much to do with teacher education as it is with the students themselves.

How then does one approach the challenge of considering business values and ethics 'carefully'? At the outset it must be stated that there are a number of hazards to be avoided. First, there is the danger of what might be termed 'values correctness'. By this I mean the avoidance of controversy and challenge by, for example, the expedient adoption of a 'value-neutral' position. But there are techniques available to teachers in order to develop strategies to open up values orientated discussion in business education. Values clarification strategies are perhaps best known, whereby controversy and challenge are encouraged by the teacher playing the role of neutral chair or occasionally 'devil's advocate'. For example, Robb (1998) has recently championed such techniques. It is suggested that in a 'Values Education Session',

- "• it must take on issues chosen by the group;
- it should discuss particular values openly (e.g. honesty, caring etc.);

- discussion follows agreed rules where listening and giving reasons are required;
- teachers' views carry no more authority than participants' - all are tested by questioning and argument;
- any consensus should not be forced on individuals, explicitly or implicitly;
- telling people what is right or how to behave are sometimes necessary and desirable - but not in a values education session: agreed values are not given, no attempt is made to inculcate or indoctrinate;
- teachers must help participants go beyond making their values explicit. Values need evaluating for the long term well being of self and others. Socratic questioning is a key skill for those running a values education session." (after Robb, 1998: 5)

The pitfall with such an approach is that one set of rules might apply in a 'Values' session and another in a more 'normal' classroom environment. As I have argued extensively throughout this thesis, in the type of business and economics courses I advocate I would hope that issues of values would arise, in a fully integrated fashion, at *any* point in a lesson, as and when appropriate. Although it may be beneficial, and indeed necessary for the teacher at times to signpost specific 'value sessions' so as to ensure that during them the 'rules' outlined above are adhered to, one would hope that most would apply all of the time, so as to encourage a particular and deeper engagement with relevant issues. I shall return to the practicalities of such an approach in more detail below.

A second danger is of projecting a notion that all values are subjective and relative, and that there are no absolutes. The hazard with such an approach is clear, especially in a business context. Put simply, it allows for expediency. Take cigarette manufacturers, who are aware and have been for some time, of the dangers associated with smoking. Despite this knowledge, they continue to insist on the 'right' to offer consumers in less developed countries, 'choice' through extensive marketing, whilst simultaneously arguing that in the developed world advertising on the sides of racing cars is simply a matter of trying to persuade people to switch brands rather than take up the habit. Young people immediately recognise the hypocrisy involved, but they are capable of similar inconsistency themselves. For instance, one of the questions in the essay paper of an A-level Business Studies examination concerned the roles of and relationship between management and employees. The students dutifully adopted what might be

termed a moral or ethical stance and discussed in detail the requirement on management to be aware that people's health, social status and livelihoods in general were affected by employment practices. The case study paper sat a week or so later involved a firm that was unprofitable. The same students unhesitatingly wrote about the necessity to reduce costs and argued quite logically and in a 'business-like' way that the simplest method of achieving this was to sack some of the workers. I am not, of course, arguing that making people redundant is absolutely wrong, it is an unfortunate reality of dynamic markets, but what is indefensible is not making explicit the competing values positions that sometimes gives us these dilemmas. There is a tension between what one might call 'the rules' i.e. the way markets operate, and 'choice' i.e. how we respond within that broad framework. Take the role of the accountants, as examined in chapter seven. Griffiths (1986) described the impact on people's lives as a result of choosing to treat fixed cost and overhead allocations in different ways:

"It is not just in the area of pricing, however, where the chosen accounting treatment can influence the decision-making process. This was made horrifically clear during the bitter days of the year-long coal dispute. It was a conflict over pit closures. The National Coal Board insisted that it had to close uneconomic pits, while the union argued that jobs could and should be preserved. However, one of the least controversial aspects of that dispute was the definition of uneconomic. It was at the heart of the conflict and yet it attracted very little publicity, and there is still no certainty that a satisfactory answer has been provided. The issue was raised by a team of independent accountancy academics who challenged the viability of certain key NCB accounting documents as the basis for making pit closure decisions. They raised important questions about fixed cost and overhead allocations which, if treated in different ways, produced different conclusions. It is a sad fact that people's jobs, and this is not just in the coal industry, could be put at risk simply because the accountants decide to treat certain costs in a particular way." (Griffiths, 1986: 12)

Young people, be they graduate accountants, or students in schools, have to be helped to recognise that they have to learn to deal simultaneously with both a system and choice within that system. 'Morally careful' teaching helps them to recognise this challenge and come to terms with it in their own way, according to their own set of values and beliefs.

Chapter eight examined a parallel situation in the case of economics and business texts. The books revealed a consistently shallow way of looking at business ethics, without any recognition that there was an underlying argument, containing assumptions and presuppositions that might and perhaps should be challenged. Almost none started from basic assumptions about the place and role of business in the community. In this respect the Nuffield Project broke new ground, by asking the simple but profoundly important question right from the outset of the course: "Why do People Work?", which challenged preconceptions about the so-called 'Protestant work ethic' and suggested that there is a trade-off between measurable economic growth and societal welfare. Interestingly, however, as we saw in chapter five, this introduction has received a poor response from teachers, largely because they believe that it is not pitched at an appropriate level for sixth formers. I believe this is a misinterpretation on their part of the depth of questioning such a topic might engender. Requiring students to produce a questionnaire asking people why they work is clearly more likely to supply answers at just one, simplistic level: "for money", "because I have to" and so on, than it is to provide an examination of the underlying rationale for our behaviour and whether it is voluntary or otherwise. One is tempted to suggest that whilst issues concerning ethics and the environment are now considered part of the 'mainstream' business curriculum, they are dealt with using the same assumptions as those in many of the text-books, namely simplistically and without recognition of the complexities and sub-texts of any discussion that questions the benefits and drawbacks resulting from business activities.

A third danger to be faced when attempting to become 'morally careful' in the classroom is the possibility that the students might mistake this simply as a way of producing a list of liberal platitudes. These, if uncritically accepted might, to extend the example cited above, allow cigarette manufacturers to continue to advertise because preventing them from doing so somehow denies 'freedom of speech', or the underlying 'right' of firms in a capitalists economy to seek profits. Most students would recognise the 'freedom from/freedom to' debate, but many moral and ethical dilemmas are hard to reconcile. Take, for instance, a case study concerning the take-over of a company selling fromage frais dairy products (Marcousé and Lines, 1990: 68-70). Before the take-over took place the published accounts showed high stock levels, but it was reasoned by the acquiring firm that these could be sold off to cover the high gearing (the ratio of debt to equity) which was also apparent. Once the take-over was completed other facts emerged, namely that several months earlier a downturn in the market had coincided with a decision to expand production. In order to keep average costs down and (apparent) profit figures up, the firm had continued to produce using the new facility, but of course because they were not selling, this only added to stocks.

Furthermore these stocks were perishable items and thus diminishing in value over time; they were certainly worth far less than the balance sheet figures showed. What do we, or our students make of this scenario? Is it simply that the principle of *caveat emptor* applies? Or, is it that since it was one business taking over another, a different set of values applies to the ones that might be used in personal relationships? As with so many aspects of life, it is at the margin (arguably one of *the* key concepts in business and economics - see figure 10.2) that the really difficult decisions are made, but it would not take the creative teacher long to draw a parallel with the student who happily sells his motorbike to the local dealer knowing there is a fault with it, but who would not sell the same machine to his friend.

It is apparent from the discussion above that being 'morally careful' is not as simple as the phrase might suggest. Teachers do have pedagogic options, however. Values education strategies have been developed to take us further than the 'values education' session introduced earlier in this chapter. Figure 10.1 offers four alternatives:

Four Strategies for Values Education

Values Clarification: emphasises the process of valuing rather than particular sets of values. Can be achieved by questioning students about an issue(s) to allow the students to express their value position(s), the implications of this/these and their consistency. Thus a Socratic technique is used, challenging students to express what they value, to reconsider, and/or say what they are doing about it. Can also employ techniques such as ranking choices, Likert scales, semantic differential and role play.

Criticised for teaching the value stances that all values are subjective and simply a matter of consumer choice.

Value Analysis: emphasises the skills students need to make rational and defensible value judgements; that is, decision making in contexts of competing values. Can use many of the same techniques as 'values clarification' procedures, though here one expects to analyse, and test the veracity of, a substantial data set. A strategy involving students in six steps is usually employed, from identifying and clarifying the decision that needs to be made, establishing the relevance and veracity

of reported facts on the case, to arriving at a tentative decision and then testing the values base of this.

Moral Reasoning: a somewhat less structured version of values analysis, in which the decision making is presented in the form of a moral dilemma. The dilemma is usually prepared for students to discuss in small groups. Decisions are then presented to the whole group, the emphasis being on the reasoning behind them. The selection of dilemma is important to get right - if the 'right' decision is clear and achieves easy consensus it is not a dilemma. If handled well this process can encourage awareness of the difficulty of 'objective' decision making, and students' capacities to empathise.

Moral Probing: attempts to synthesise aspects of the three approaches above which are said to be based on different conceptions of values education - affectivist, rationalist and developmentalist respectively. Values probing proposes ten steps to form a framework for handling controversial issues. Based on the generalisation that attitudes (which are many and relatively easy to 'see') are clusters of beliefs which are, in turn, derived from the values (few in number and often hidden from view), the framework carefully requires students to explore in a non-threatening way the *values that underlie the beliefs and attitudes* involved in an issue.

(From Fien and Slater [1981; 1985] where further details can be found.)

Fig 10.1 Four strategies for Values Education

Although the strategies outlined above were constructed from the perspective of geography education, it is interesting to see how often 'decision making' appears - a central theme of business studies - as well as many of the pedagogic techniques which have been used in the best business education classrooms for a considerable time. For instance, in 'Values Clarification', the use of role play is mentioned. For many years Whitehead's *Trade-Offs. Simulations and Role Plays for Economics* (1988) has proven to be a rich source of such activities. For 'Values Probing' Riley's detailed, deeply complex and challenging story of a fictional Welsh company *Megatronix* (Riley, 1987) offers a variety of scenarios, as we watch the company grow in a rural environment, become profitable and offer employment (but with a not altogether positive effect on the community), and then go into decline as technology renders its

output unsaleable, with the result that it is taken over by a 'footloose' multinational whose motives are, to say the least, mixed.

That said, the application of 'different' or creative teaching techniques involving such methods as case studies, role plays and simulations does not offer any better *guarantee* of 'moral carefulness' taking place in classrooms than those of a more traditional style. Ultimately it depends on the teacher. After all, it is as possible to use Whitehead's book simplistic as it is to write 'Bodyshop' on the board with a 'tick' next to it under the heading, 'Ethical Company'. However, such a situation is far less likely with *Megatronix*, for the simple reason that Riley's Teacher's Guide is as creative and imaginative as the case itself, and is therefore an excellent tool for in-service training.

In Table 10. I have attempted to offer some examples of topics within the business and economics curriculum that might offer possibilities for deeper, more 'careful' and critical analysis. It should be noted that the so-called 'concepts' in the left-hand column are not of equal weight and would demand quite different approaches. It is also important to emphasise that the concepts chosen are representative and in no sense exhaustive (see also Lines and Vertigan, 1997).

'Concept'	'Consideration'
The notion of the 'margin'.	Recognition that marginal analysis is crucial in all markets and that it has applicability in the personal, social and political spheres as well as the economic.
The market mechanism.	Examine rationality as more than self interest. Acknowledge that constraints, preferences and expectations that determine choice and actions can be influenced by moral issues.
The impact of monopolies and monopolistic behaviour.	Student should examine the normative aspects of efficiency. The 'better' use of resources to make someone 'better off' involves interpersonal comparisons of well being.
A 'fair' wage.	Questions centring on the word 'fair': to whom, the individual, the taxpayer, society in general or business itself?

Marketing.	Ethical aspects of advertising, recognising its worth as well as drawbacks. Marketing's contribution to culture. Does it reflect our values or drive them?
The ethical firm.	Is it possible for a firm to be 'ethical'? Is such a concept either disguised utilitarianism or egoism? Is there a 'social contract' theory of behaviour that applies to firms, and if it does, does it apply in an international as well as a national context?
Production and Consumption.	What are the determinants of resource and factor allocation? Are there different (better) ways of organising the way we produce and consume goods and services, or are they in practice beyond our collective, much less individual control?
Economic development.	Is there, or should there be a limit to 'growth', and in any case what does 'growth' mean? Does the current distribution of wealth within and between societies around the world represent the fair working of the market, specialisation, the division of labour and comparative advantage, or are these terms being used as a way of 'justifying' a form of cultural and economic imperialism?
Business and the environment.	What is the scientific basis for environmental worries? Is there such a thing as 'finite resources' or will the market take care of their allocation? What is the role of national and international government in a world dominated by multinationals?

Table 10.1 A selection of business and economics topics offering possibilities for deeper, more 'careful' analysis.

The following section attempts to illustrate the way the principles outlined above might be put into practice in the classroom. It is built around a case study/role play exercise written for a commercial publisher (Lines, 1990), designed not only to demonstrate certain straightforward theoretical business principles, especially pricing decisions in different markets, but also to stress values issues. Like the best case studies, I believe it operates at a number of levels. As well as introducing and reinforcing theoretical knowledge and understanding, it also allows for the development of a wide variety of other skills, such as those of analysis, application, creativity, communication and

perception (Marcousé and Lines, 1990). Which of these the teacher chooses to emphasise will depend on circumstances, the age and ability of the students, the case study's place in the overall scheme of work and so on, although the very action of participation is of itself a more effective learning mechanism than many of a more conventional type (Whitehead, 1988: Introduction).

The case is centred on a British company that produces two goods, Doppler X and Doppler Y, the latter being a new and superior version of the earlier one. The firm is the market leader in Britain with Doppler X, which it also successfully exports to the USA. In the States the firm is less well-known and is very much a price taker. Because of the competition there, these prices are generally much lower than in the home market and consequently margins and profit levels are also lower. Naturally there is potential to export to other markets; the firm's own market research suggests a country within South America may be ready to buy either X or Y or both.

The case is about marketing strategy. Armed with data on costs of production and output potential for the X and Y, and information on sales and prices charged for the X at home and in the States, the participants must carefully consider their tactics and a strategy for the future, all within a limited and defined time scale. The teaching focus at this stage is about prices and sales volumes, but after results have been collected, it expands to business ethics and development issues.

The case can be run with various groups: GCSE, 'A' level, post-graduate and specialist. The results suggest a uniformity of thinking at least at one level and this is not surprising, for participants, working in groups, want to 'win' in the sense of offering the 'best' market solution. Invariably the new product, Doppler Y, is introduced into both the home market and the United States at a premium price. Companies who demand the technically superior product will pay the extra. The price of Doppler X is reduced to squeeze competitors further. (In Britain there is even the possibility of destroyer pricing to eliminate the competition totally.) But what of the country in South America? Is it offered Doppler Y? Inevitably no, it must accept the inferior Doppler X, and very often also at a premium price.

In 1997 a group of sixty three beginning teachers of business and economics at the Institute of Education used the Doppler case (Brant, Lines and Unwin, 1997). They were divided into thirteen groups and their results were as follows: In the UK market they fixed prices for Doppler X which ranged between £2.80 and £3.30, whilst all but one of the groups decided to introduce Doppler Y at a price premium, ranging from £3.00 to £6.00. In the USA the competitive environment was reflected in the prices,

which ranged from £1.50 to £1.80 for Doppler X and £1.75 to £6.00 for Y. Five of the teams abandoned selling Doppler X in the USA altogether.

Predictably, only two teams decided not to venture into the South American market at all, whilst the rest, with one honourable exception, decided to introduce the technically *inferior* Doppler X at prices ranging from £1.80 to £3.99; in other words at a price generally as high, or higher than in the UK. The action made commercial sense, which was to clear stocks of the old fashioned product whilst still earning large margins during the period when sales of the new product built up. The fact that this would widen the gap between 'rich' and 'poor' countries often simply did not enter the discussion, or if it did it was regarded as a matter for some regret, but little else. The one team that did decide to introduce Doppler Y at a price of £2.99, did so quite deliberately as a non-commercial gesture, as a means of indirect aid to the developing world. In my experience of using the case study this action is highly unusual, but it may reflect this particular student group: all post-graduates of economics or business related subjects wanting to become teachers of those subjects.

The de-brief to the case is crucial, for this is the time when whole-class discussion can range over the issues involved, from those of a subject-based nature to others of a broader aspect. There is, of course, no 'right' answer to the technical price and output decisions, and that is a lesson well learnt, but it is also important for students to realise that the technicalities of supply/demand interaction operate only in a generalised way, and that if your sales force requires a price at which to sell the product, you have to set it and then see how the market responds. The difficulties of decision-making within a time constraint are therefore clearly illustrated.

Perhaps with some prompting from the teacher, but more likely with none, values issues will surface, including some mentioned in figure 10.2, such as the margin, the ethical firm, the market, economic development and so on. What is the responsibility of the individual or a single firm towards the developing world? Does having a number of market outlets and opportunities change a firm's perspectives? Does it make a difference what products are being produced: what if Doppler X and Y were essential armament components, for example? In chapter eight the students raised perfectly valid ideas about how a firm acts or might act ethically - as part of a social contract or in a Kantian sense. The problem, as Robin expressed it, is that business ethics "are about taking responsibility independently of the profit margin. This is seldom done...A business may reply that, in economics, as opposed to the world of moral utopias, it is 'every man for himself'" (chapter nine). This is precisely the discussion that will almost certainly follow the Doppler case. Invariably someone will say "If we don't do

it someone else will" and/or "we have a responsibility to look after our employees and shareholders at home" and/or "we're not forcing them to buy it" and so: all the arguments advanced by real-world companies in similar situations. Undeniably such arguments carry force and the teacher may have to move into a 'values' session in order to explore them further, or play devil's advocate in a Socratic test of their validity. In the end, especially at the margin, choices between alternative actions are made depending on fundamental beliefs, because, just as ego-centred comments often arise, it is equally predictable that at one stage or another in the debate a student will declare "Well, *I* just wouldn't do it". It is at that point, where individuals use fundamental values in order to determine responses and actions, that such beliefs may be explored and tested in the classroom situation. Yet such a test is fraught with danger for both the teacher and student, because trust and respect, which are so hard to win may easily be lost. Hence the need in such circumstances for the kind of structures that have been outlined above, which allow discussion to be unthreatening and constructive and not the reverse.

The purpose of this section has been two-fold. First to reinforce the emphasis made throughout the thesis that business education is far more than an analysis of business and economic systems; in my view it is the values base underpinning them that 'morally careful' teaching will uncover. Second, I have attempted to offer some concrete illustrations of both the problems and opportunities that a rigorous and thorough investigation of values issues in business and economics education might look like.

This section has explored the central theme of the thesis, namely the relation between values and business education. It highlights the role of business education in promoting in students an understanding of values, through teaching about values (Haydon, 1997). It also shows the role of values education strategies in an effective business and economics education environment. That said, there are other considerations that have been examined in this work that extend beyond these immediate subject boundaries and it is to those I now, finally, turn.

10.6 Conclusion

Using the constructs of business and economics education, the thesis represents an attempt to inform curriculum development in the future. Whilst recognising that there will always be pressures to have a syllabus approved, a text-book written and teachers re-trained in the fastest possible time, in the end this is counter-productive because any

work that is under-theorised increases the risk, if not of ultimate failure, of it having to be constantly changed and modified. This applies as much in a vocational context as it does in an 'academic' one. In order for curriculum development to become embedded in an effective way, therefore, time must be spent reflecting upon what, ultimately, the learning experience is designed to achieve. To do this the student must be seen as a developing individual, receiving inputs from a wide variety of sources, processing them and then forming his or her own values for the future.

In chapter two I referred to the process of writing as being "creative of itself" and that the notion of 'curriculum congruence' was formed from previously "disparate, disjointed or part-considered ideas concerning values and the developing individual". As I now reach the end of this process, it is important to offer a final reflection on the meaning and significance of the term 'congruence', especially recalling the aim, mentioned in the opening chapter, of adding "depth and richness" to Bruner's notion of teaching any subject effectively in an intellectually honest form at any stage of development. In order to accumulate evidence to achieve this aim, the thesis has been wide-ranging. It has focused on economics and business education, and in the process has provided the first detailed analysis of the place and significance of these subjects in the school curriculum of England and Wales. In that context it has also examined the two major national curriculum developments of the last decade or so and explored an area as yet unresolved, namely the relationship between education and vocational training. The conclusion is that while values are often (though by no means always) considered, the differing needs of developing young people are given scant attention in the process of curriculum development. Furthermore, the dynamic relationship described in chapter one, which has been called 'curriculum congruence' is simply ignored, perhaps deliberately but more likely because it has not been articulated before, in the way this thesis has done.

The 'interlocking circles' described in figure 1.1 symbolise the challenge of achieving 'congruence', for each one has its own dynamic: with values, rates of development and subject content all changing and adjusting, sometimes apparently independently, sometimes in harmony and sometimes not. This is a process that the information revolution is likely to speed up, leaving the curriculum developer struggling for what might seem an elusive goal. Elusive though it may be, the force of the evidence in this thesis is that it must be sought, for without it, schools and the education system generally, become less effective in their prime function of preparing young people for their role as the citizens of tomorrow.

10.7 References

- Brant, J., Lines, D., & Unwin, A. (1997) "Global Markets, Business Education and Ethical Dilemmas" in *Global Perspectives in Initial Teacher Education: Training Teachers for Tomorrow* London: Development Education and Institute of Education.
- Fien, J. & Slater, F. (1981) Four Strategies for Values Education in Geography" *Geographical Education* 4: 39-52.
- Fien, J. & Slater, F. (1985) "Four Strategies for Values Education in Geography" in Boardman, D. (Ed) *New Directions in Geography Education*. Lewes: Falmer Press.
- Griffith, I. (1986) *Creative Accounting* London: Waterstone & Co., Ltd.
- Haydon, G. (1997) *Teaching about Values* London: Cassell.
- Lambert, D. (1999) "Geography and moral education in a supercomplex world: the significance of values education and some remaining dilemmas" in *Ethics, Place and Environment* 1: 2: 7-20
- Lines, D. (1990) "The Doppler Effect" in Pinto, M. & Carr, N. (Eds.) *Cases in Economics* Brentwood: Westbury Press.
- Lines, D. and Vertigan, S. (1997) "Ethics, Economics and Economics Education" in Slater, S., Lambert, D., & Lines, D. (Eds.) *Education, Environment & Economy: Research Issues* London: Institute of Education, University of London
- Marcousé, I., and Lines, D. (first edition 1990) *Business Case Studies* Harlow: Longman.
- Riley, C. (1987) *Megatronix* Harlow: Longman.
- Robb, W. (1998) "What is Values Education and So What?" in *Journal of Values Education* 1: 1: 1-13
- Whitehead, D. (Ed.) (1988) *Trade-Offs. Simulations and Role Plays for Economics* Harlow: Longman.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Initials, such as DES, DFE etc., which are used in the text, are here entered alphabetically and then in chronological order.

- Abbot, P. (1995) *Text of Speech Delivered to a group of Norwegian Teachers*, Norway House, London. Nov. 18.
- Abbs, P. (1987) "Towards a Coherent Arts Aesthetic" in Abbs, P. (Ed.) *Living Powers: The Arts in Education*, London: Falmer Press.
- Abbs, P. (Ed.) (1987) *Living Powers: The Arts in Education*, London: Falmer Press.
- Ableson, P. (1996) "Declining Enrolments in Economics: the Australian experience", in *Royal Economics Newsletter*, October.
- Adey, P. and Shayer, M. (1994) *Really Raising Standards*, London, Routledge.
- Aldrich, R. (1988) "The National Curriculum: An historical Perspective", in Lawton, D., and Chitty, C. (Eds.) *Bedford Way Papers/33. The National Curriculum*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Aldrich, R. (1991) "Introduction", in Aldrich, R. (Ed.) *History in the National Curriculum*, Bedford Way Paper. London: Kogan Page and Institute of Education, University of London.
- Aldrich, R. (1996) *Education for the Nation*, London: Cassell.
- Aldrich, R. (Ed.) (1991) *History in the National Curriculum*, Bedford Way Paper. London: Kogan Page and Institute of Education, University of London.
- Aldrich, R. and White, J. (1998) *The National Curriculum beyond 2000: the QCA and the Aims of Education*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Aldrich-Moodie, B., and Kwong, J. (1997) *Environmental Education* London: Institute of Economic Affairs.

- Antaki C., and Lewis, A. (1985) *Mental Mirrors - Metacognition in Social Knowledge and Communication*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Ashworth, P., and Saxton, J. (1990) "On Competence" in *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 14, No. 2 Summer.
- Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association. (1989) *Education 16 - 19. Breaking the Barriers* AMMA.
- Atkinson, A. (1996) "Assessing Diverse Elements in GNVQ" in Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Baker, K. (1993) *Turbulent Years: My Life in Politics*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Balen, M. (1994) *Kenneth Clarke*, London: Fourth Estate.
- Barber, M. (1996) *The Learning Game. Arguments for an Educational Revolution*, London: Victor Gollancz.
- Barber, M. (1997) "Avoid diversions on necessary journeys" in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 20 June: 104.
- Barber, M. (1997) "Conference Keynote Address" in *Global Perspectives in Initial Teacher Education: Training Teachers for Tomorrow*, Conference Papers. London: Development Education Association.
- Barker, R. (1974) "Lessons from the A-level Business Studies Project" in Whitehead, D. (Ed.) *Curriculum Developments in Economics*, London: Heinemann.
- Barnes, S. (1984) "Through the Classroom Walls" in Simkin, D., and Simkin, J. (Eds.) *Curriculum Development in Action*, Brighton: Tressell Publications.
- Barnes, S. (1991) *A is for Alienation, Art and A level*, Paper presented at Langrish House, Hampshire, 5 October.
- Barnes, S. (1991) *Why Does the Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project. Need a Debate about Fundamental Issues?* Paper presented at Langrish House Hampshire, 5 October.

- Barnes, S. (1993) "A-level courses in Business Studies" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 1 No 1 Spring.
- Barnes, S. (1993) *Essential Business Studies*, London: Collins.
- Barnes, S. (1995) *Corporate Responsibility*, Harlow: Longman.
- Barnes, S. (1995) *Nuffield Data Book*, Harlow: Longman.
- Barnes, S. (1997) Interview. 14/8. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Barnett, M. (1993) "A Coherent Policy for Science and Technology - Some Difficulties Explained" in O'Hear P and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Barnett, R. (1994) *The Limits of Competence*, Open University Press.
- Bassey, M. (1990) "On the Nature of Research in Education (part 2)" *Research Intelligence*, Bera Newsletter Autumn: 39-44.
- Beardshaw, J., Gavin, M., and Ross, A. (1993) "Back to the Future: The case for political Economy" in *Economics education 16-19 project. Working paper 3*, Economics Association.
- Beauchamp, T.L. and Bowie, N.E. (Eds.) (1993, 4th edition) *Ethical Theory and Business*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Beaumont, G. (1995) *Review of 100 NVQs and SVQs: A Report Submitted for the DfEE*, London: DFEE.
- Beeline: The Newsletter of the Economics and Business Education Association* No. 1, March 1997.
- Bell, J. (1993) *Doing Your Research Project*, Milton Keynes: Open University.
- Benn, C., and Chitty, C. (1998) "Post-16 Provision: the next battleground for Comprehensive Education" in *Forum*, Vol. 40, No. 2: 50-51.

- Berk, R. A. (Ed.) (1984) *A Guide to Criterion-Referenced Test Construction*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Bernstein, B. (1971) "On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge" in Young, M. F. D. (Ed.) *Knowledge and Control*, London: Collier Macmillan.
- Birnbaum, I. (1990) "An Assessment of IT Capability" in *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, Vol. 6, No. XX.
- Black, P. (1993) "The Shifting Scenery of the National Curriculum" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Blaug, M. (1992) *The Methodology of Economics*, 2nd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blenkin, G. M., Edwards, G., and Kelly, A. V. (1992) *Change and the Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Bloomer, M. (1998) "They tell you what to do and then they let you get on with it: the illusion of progressivism in GNVQ" in *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 11, No. 2: 167-186.
- Bolton, E. (1993) "Perspectives on the National Curriculum" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Borg, W. R. (1963) *Educational Research: An Introduction*, London: Longman.
- Borg, W. R., and Gall, M. D. (1989) *Educational Research. An Introduction*, New York: Longman.
- Boyce, D. (1993) *What is New Economics?* London: New Economics Foundation.
- Brant, J. (1998) "Does Learning Business Studies (at Advanced level) Improve Student Ability to Articulate Value Positions?" *Edd Methods of Enquiry 2*, Unpublished EdD Paper, London: Institute of Education, University of London.

- Brant, J., Lines, D., & Unwin, A. (1997) "Global Markets, Business Education and Ethical Dilemmas" in *Global Perspectives in Initial Teacher Education: Training Teachers for Tomorrow* London: Development Education and Institute of Education.
- Brighouse, T. (1996) "Foreword" in Steiner, M. *Developing the Global Teacher*, Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.
- Brittan, S., and Hamlin, A. (1994) *Market Capitalism and Moral Values*, Edward Elgar.
- Brue, S. L. (1996) *Controversy and Change in the American economics curriculum*, Paper presented at the Pacific Rim Allied Economic Organisation Conference, Hong Kong.
- Bruner, J. S. (1960, reprinted 1977) *The Process of Education*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. S., (1966) *Towards a Theory of Instruction*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bryson, D. (1998) "Behavioural Difficulties" in *The Times educational Supplement*, Secondary p.17.
- Buchanan, J. M. (1992) "Economics in the post-Socialist century" in Hey, J. D. (Ed.) *The Future of Economics*, Royal Economic Society, Blackwell.
- Callahan, D. (1980) "Goals in the teaching of ethics" in Callahan, D., and Bok, S. (Eds.) *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education*, New York: Plenum Press.
- Callahan, D. and Bok, S. (Eds.) (1980) *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education*, New York: Plenum Press.
- Capel, J. (1997) Interview, 4th. September. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Capey, J. (1995) *GNVQ Assessment Review*, London: NCVQ.
- Carr, E. H. (1961, reprinted 1987) *What is History*, London: Macmillan.

- Cassidy, S. (1998) "GNVQs Start to run out of Steam" in *Times Educational Supplement*, Nov. 6: 6.
- Chambers, I. (1987) "Business Studies at GCSE" in *Economics*, Vol. 23. Part 3:71-76.
- Chambers, I. (1987) "CAL in Business Studies" in Hurd, S. J. (Ed.) *Computers in Economics and Business Education*, Heinemann Educational Books.
- Chambers, I (1991) "GCSE Business Studies" in Whitehead, D., and Dyer, D. (Eds.) *New Developments in Economics and Business Education*, London: Kogan Page.
- Chitty, C. (1989) *Towards a New Educational System: The Victory of the New Right?* Lewes: The Falmer Press.
- Chitty, C. (1992) "What Future for Subjects?" in Ribbins, P (Ed.) *Delivering the National Curriculum*, Harlow: Longman
- Chitty, C. (Ed.) (1993) *The National Curriculum - is it Working?* Harlow: Longman.
- Chitty, C. (1996) *Generating a National Curriculum. Block 4: Organising and Control of Schooling*, Milton Keynes: The Open University.
- Clifford, J. (1986) Interview. 8 December. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Coates, G., Hurd, S., and Anderton, A. (1998) *Nuffield Economics and Business A-level: An Evaluation of Curriculum Integration*, Staffordshire University.
- Cohen, L., and Manion, L. (1994) *Research Methods in Education*, 4th Ed. London: Routledge.
- Coles, M. (1997) *Methods and Effectiveness in GNVQ Teaching and Learning*, London: NCVQ.
- Cox, C. B., and Boyson, R. (Eds.) (1977) *Black Papers 1977*, London: Temple-Smith.
- Cox, C. B., and Dyson, A. K. (Eds.) (1969) *Fight for Education: A Black Paper*, Manchester: Critical Quarterly Association.

- Cox, C. B., and Dyson, A. K. (Eds.) (1969) *Black Paper Two: The Crisis in Education*, Manchester: Critical Quarterly Association.
- Cryer, P. (1996) *The Research student's Guide to Success*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Cullimore, D., Brumfitt, K., and Atkinson, A. (1996) "An evaluation of the Strategies for Integrating Information Technology in the teaching of Business Education within the 14-19 Curriculum" in Walstad W. B. *Secondary Economics and Business Education. New Developments in the United Kingdom, United States and Other Nations*, London: The Economics and Business Education Association.
- Dahlgren, L. O. (1984) "Outcomes of Learning" in Marton, F., Hounsell, D., and Entwistle, N. (Eds.) *The Experience of Learning*, Scottish Academic Press.
- Dancy, J. (1987) Interview. 23 January. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Darking, L. (1986) "Double Slice of the Real World" in the *Times Educational Supplement*, 1 August.
- Daugherty, R. (1995) *National Curriculum Assessment*, London: Falmer Press.
- Davies, I. (1994) "Education for Citizenship" in *Curriculum*, Summer: 67-74.
- Davies, P. (1991) *Information Technology in economics and business studies classrooms*, London: The Economics Association.
- Davies, P. (1996) "Economics and Business Studies: A Subject in the Curriculum?" in Walstad, W. B. (Ed.) *Secondary Economics and Business Education. New Developments in the United Kingdom, United States and Other Nations*, London: Economics and Business Education Association.
- Dawson, G. G. (1977) "Research in Economic Education at the Precollege Level" in Wentworth, D. R., Hansen, W. L., and Hawke, S. H. (Eds.) *Perspectives on Economic Education*, New York: Joint Council on Economic Education.
- Dearing, R. (1993) *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: Interim Report*, SCAA.

- Dearing, R. (1994) *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: Final Report*, SCAA.
- Dearing, R. (1996) *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds*, SCAA.
- Dearing, R. (1998) "Getting it Together - An Educational Overview." Text of a speech given to the Lloyds TSB Forum, London: Lloyds TSB Group Ltd.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science *Statistics of Education, School Leavers*, HMSO.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1976) *School Education in England: Problems and Initiatives*, London: DES.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1977) *Curriculum 11 - 16. Working papers by HM Inspectorate: a contribution to current debate*, London: HMSO.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1978) *National Survey of Secondary Education*, London: HMSO.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1981) *Education for 16-19 Year Olds (The MacFarlane Report)*, HMSO.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1987) *Report by H. M. Inspectors on the Hampshire Business and Information Project*, HMSO.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1987) *Kenneth Baker calls for curriculum for pupils of all abilities*, Press Release 22/87 23 January.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1987) *The National Curriculum 5-16: a consultation document*, London: DES, July.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1988) *Advancing A-Levels, Report of the Committee Chaired by Professor Higginson*, London: HMSO.
- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1988) *National Curriculum Task Group on Assessment and Testing: a report*, London: DES.

- (DES) Department of Education and Science (1989) *National curriculum: From Policy to Practice*, London: DES.
- (DFE) Department for Education (1992) *The Implementation of the Curricular Requirements of ERA - An Overview by HM Inspectorate on the Second Year, 1990-91*, London: HMSO.
- (DFE) Department for Education (1992) *The Implementation of the Curricular Requirements of ERA*, London: DFE.
- (DFE) Department for Education (1992) *Initial Teacher Training (Secondary Phase)*, Circular 9/92, London: DFE.
- (DFEE) Department for Education and Employment (1997) *Qualifying for Success. A consultative Paper on the Future of Post-16 Qualifications*, DFEE Publications
- Development Education Association and the Institute of Education (1997) *Global Perspectives in Initial Teacher Education: Training Teachers for Tomorrow*, Conference Papers. London: Development Education Association.
- Devons, E. (1961) *Essays in Economics*, London: Allen and Unwin.
- Dobbert, M. L. (1982) *Ethnographic Research: Theory and Application for Modern Schools and Societies*, New York: Praeger.
- (DOE) Department of Employment, (1972) *Training for the Future*, London: HMSO.
- Dransfield, R. (Ed.) (1998) *GNVQ Today*, Issue 7 Summer. Hebdon Bridge: Peacock Press.
- Dransfield, R. (1998) "Griper" in Dransfield, R. (Ed.) *GNVQ Today*, Issue 7 Summer. Hebdon Bridge: Peacock Press.
- Dransfield, R., Yeomans, B., and Wales, J. (1995) *Resources and Expansion*, Harlow: Longman.
- Dyer, D. (1979) "Business Studies, School and Community - Links with Industry" in *Economics*, Vol. XV, Part 4, Winter, pp. 121-125.

- Dyer, D. (1986) *Cambridge Business Studies: An Introductory Booklet*, Cambridge Business Studies Project.
- Dyer, D. (1986) Interview. 4th December. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Dyer, D. (1991) "The Business Studies Curriculum at A Level" in Whitehead, D., and Dyer, D. (Eds.) *New Developments in Economics and Business Education*, London: Kogan Page.
- (EBEA) Economics and Business Education Association (1995) *Core Economics*, Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Editorial (1997) "Europe's Farm Follies" in *The Economist*, 6.9. Vol. 344 No 8033.
- Elliott, J. (1991) *Action Research for Educational Change*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ellis, B. (1998) "Nuffield First Impressions" in *Business Review Teacher's Notes*, Vol. 5 No. 2.
- Eraut, M. (1994) *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Etzioni, A. (1988) *The Moral Dimension: Towards a New Economics*, New York: Tree Press.
- Evans R. J. (1997) *In Defence of History*, London: Granta Books.
- (FEDA) Further Education Development Agency, Institute of Education and The Nuffield Foundation (1994) *GNVQs 1993-97: A National Survey Report - Interim*, London: FEDA.
- (FEDA) Further Education Development Agency, Institute of Education and The Nuffield Foundation (1997) *GNVQs 1993-97: A National Survey Report*, London: FEDA.
- (FEFC) Further Education Funding Council (1994) *General National Vocational Qualifications in the Further Education Sector in England*, Coventry: FEFC.

(FEFC) Further Education Funding Council (1997) *Standards and their Assurance in Vocational Qualifications: National Survey Report*, FEFC.

Fien, J & Slater, F. (1981) Four Strategies for Values Education in Geography" *Geographical Education* 4: 39-52.

Fien, J & Slater, F. (1985) Four Strategies for Values Education in Geography" in Boardman, D. (Ed) *New Directions in Geography Education*. Lewis: Falmer Press.

Finegold, D., Keep, E., Miliband, D., Raffe, D., Spours, K., and Young, M (1990) *A British Baccalaureate: Overcoming Divisions between Education and Training*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Foulkes, J. (1997) "Examining and Results Determination System Analysis" in Hoskin, K., and Geddes, B. (Eds.) *ICAEW Pass Rates Research*, London: ICAEW.

Fowler, W. S. (1990) *Implementing the National Curriculum*, London: Kogan Page.

Friedman, M. (1953) "The Methodology of Positive Economics" in *Essays in Positive Economics*, University of Chicago Press.

Friedman, M. (1970) "The Social Responsibility of Business is to increase its profits." in *New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970 reprinted in Beauchamp, T. L. and Bowie, N. E. (Eds.) (1993) *Ethical Theory and Business*, (4th edn) New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

(GARP) (1994) *GNVQ Assessment Review Project - A Technical Report published by the Employment department's Learning Methods Branch*, Report No. 23 July.

Geddes, B. (1995) *The Development of Accountancy Education, Training and Research in England: A study of the Relationship between Professional Education and Training, Academic Education and Research, and Professional Practice in English Chartered Accountancy*, Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Manchester.

Ghaill, M. (1993) "The National Curriculum and Equal Opportunities" in Chitty, C. (Ed.) *The National Curriculum - is it Working?* Harlow: Longman.

- Gilbert, R. (1984) *The Impotent Image: Reflections on ideology in the Secondary Curriculum*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Gipps, C. (1988) "What Exams would mean for Primary Education " in Lawton, D. and Chitty, C. *Bedford Way Papers/33. The National Curriculum*, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Gipps, C. (1993) "The Structure for Assessment and Recording" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Gipps, C. (1994) *Beyond Testing*, London: Falmer Press.
- Gipps, C., and Wood, R. (1981) "The Testing of Reading in LEAs. The Bullock Report 7 Years On" in *Educational Studies*, Vol. 7 No. 2.
- Goodson, I. F. (Ed.) (1985) *Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Goodson, I. F. (1987) *School Subjects and Curriculum Change*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Goodson, I. F. (1988) *The Making of Curriculum*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Gordon, P (Ed.) (1996) *A Guide to Educational Research*. London: Woburn Press.
- Graham, D., with Tytler, D. (1993) *A Lesson for us all*, London: Routledge.
- Green, F. (1998) "Can economics stem a drop in interest rates?" in *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, October 30. p.4.
- Green, M (1996) *Survey of Demand for Shorthand in Basingstoke Companies*, Unpublished.
- Grey, C., Robson, K., and Anderson, F. (1997) "Pass Rates Research: The Trainees Experience" in Hoskin, K., and Geddes, B (Eds.) *ICAEW Pass Rates Research* London: ICAEW.
- Griffith, I.(1986) *Creative Accounting* London: Waterstone & Co., Ltd.

Guratsky, S. (1984) "The Adequacy of A-level Syllabuses" in *Economics*, Vol. XX: No. 2: Summer

Habermas, J. (1972) *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Heinemann.

Hall D., and Raffo, C. (1997) "Running on Empty? A Perspective on the Future for A-level Business Studies" in *Teaching Economics and Business*, Vol. 1., Part 1, No 2, Economics and Business Education Association.

Handy, C (1984) *The Empty Raincoat*, London: Hutchinson.

Handy, C. (1995) *Beyond Certainty*, London: Hutchinson.

Harcourt, G. (1994) "Essential ingredients of alternative approaches in the 'A' level syllabus" in McCormick, B., and Vidler, C. *Teaching and Learning the New Economics*, Oxford: Heinemann.

Hargreaves, D. (1991) "Coherence and manageability: reflections on the National Curriculum and cross-curricular provision" in *Curriculum Journal*, Vol. 2, No 1, pp. 32-41.

Hausman, D.M. (Ed.) (1994 2nd edition) *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hausman, D. M., and McPherson, M. S. (1993) "Taking ethics seriously: Economics and Contemporary moral philosophy" in *Journal of Economic literature*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, June, pp. 671-731.

Hausman, D. M., and McPherson, M. S. (1994) "Economics, rationality and ethics" in Hausman, D. M. (Ed.) *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*, 2nd edition, Cambridge: CUP.

Hausman, D. M., and McPherson, M. S. (1996) *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy*, Cambridge: CUP.

Haydon, G. (1997) *Teaching about Values*, London: Cassell.

- Helburn, S. (1986) "Economics and economics education: the selective use of discipline structures in economics curricula" in Hodkinson, S., and Whitehead, D. (Eds.) *Economics Education: Research and Development Issues*, Harlow: Longman.
- Henley Centre (1996) "The Demand for and demands on Chartered Accountants to the Year 2002" in Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, *Safeguarding the Future: An Education and Training Consultation Document*, London: ICAEW.
- Hey, J.D. (Ed.) (1992) *The Future of Economics*, Royal Economic Society, Blackwell.
- Hicks, D. (1981) *Bias in Geography Textbooks: Images of the Third World and Multi-ethnic Britain*, London: Centre for Multicultural Education, Working Paper No. 1: ULIE.
- Hicks, D., and Holden, C. (1995) *Visions of the Future: why we need to teach for tomorrow*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.
- Hirst, P. H. (1974) *Knowledge and the Curriculum*, London: Routledge.
- Hirst, P. (1993) "The Foundations of the National Curriculum: Why Subjects" in O'Hear, P., & White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Hirst, P. H., and Peters, R. S. (1970) *The Logic of Education*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Hirst, P (1993) "The Foundations of the National Curriculum: Why Subjects" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) (1997) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.
- Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (1997) "From the 1991 White Paper to the Dearing Report: A Conceptual and Historical Framework for the 1990s" in Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.

Hodkinson, P., and Mattinson, K. (1994) "A Bridge Too Far? The Problems Facing GNVQ" in *The Curriculum Journal*, Vol. 5 No. 3.

Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) (1996) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.

Hodkinson, S., and Whitehead, D. (Eds.) (1986) *Economics Education: Research and Development Issues*, Harlow: Longman.

Hoogendijk, W. (1991) *The Economic Revolution*, Green Print.

Horton, T. (Ed.) (1990) *Assessment Debates*, Milton Keynes: Open University.

Hoskin, K., and Geddes, B (1997) (Eds.) *ICAEW Pass Rates Research*, London: ICAEW.

Hosner, L. T. (1988) "The other 388: Why a majority of our schools of Business Administration do not offer a course in Business Ethics" in *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 4 pp. 17-22.

Hurd, S. J. (1986) "Survey of Computer Use in Economics and Business Studies" pp. 120-127 in *Economics*, Vol. XXII, Part 3, No. 95 Autumn.

Hurd, S. J. (1987) (Ed.) *Computers in Economics and Business Education*, Heinemann Educational Books.

Hurd, S. J. (1990) "Report on the 1989 National Survey of Computer Use in Economics and Business Studies" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVI, Part 3, No. 111, Autumn 134-140.

Hurd, S. J. (1995) "Third National Survey of Computer Use in Economics and Business Education 1995" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 3: No. 4, Winter.

Hutton, W. (1996) *The State We're In*, London: Vintage.

Hyland, T. (1994) *Competence, Education and NVQs*, London: Cassell.

- (ICAEW) Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, (1993) *Chartered Accountant - the Future of our Qualification. Report on Strategy for Education and Training*, London: ICAEW.
- (ICAEW) Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, (1996) *Safeguarding the Future: An Education and Training Consultation Document*, London: ICAEW.
- (ICRA) International Centre for Research on Assessment, Institute of Education and the Centre for Curriculum and Assessment Studies, University of Bristol (1995) *Evaluation of the Use of Set Assignments in GNVQ (SAGE Project)*, Manpower Services Commission.
- Institute of Education (1996) *PGCE Handbook*, London: Institute of Education.
- Jacobs, A. (1993) "The New Economics: a new Paradigm for the 21st Century" *Economics education 16-19 project. Working paper 2*, Economics Association.
- Jessup, G. (1991) *Outcomes: NVQs and the Emerging Model of Education and Training*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Joint Committee of the Royal Economics Society, the Association of University Teachers of Economics and The Economics Association (1973) *The Teaching of Economics in Schools*, Macmillan.
- Jones, V. (1998) Interview, 12th February. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Kay, J. (1993) "Economics in Business" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 1, No.1 part 2. pp. 74-78 Summer.
- Kelly, A V (1990) *The National Curriculum: A Critical Review*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing
- Kelsey, B. (1987) "Business and Information Studies Course" in Hurd, S. J. *Computers in Economics and Business Education*, Heinemann Educational Books.
- Kelsey, B. (1998) Interview, 16/3. Tape recording in author's possession.

- Kelsey, B., and Lambert, P. (1988) "Business metamorphosis" in the *Times Educational Supplement* 26 February.
- Kent, A., Lambert, D., Naish, M., and Slater, S. (1996) *Geography in Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kerr, D. (Ed.) *Developing Economic and Industrial Understanding in the Curriculum*, London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Kirk, J., and Miller, M. (1986) *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*, Sage University Paper Series on Qualitative Research Methods, Vol. 1, Newbury Park: Sage
- Klein, G. (1996) "A Curriculum for Courage" in Steiner, M. (Ed.) *Developing the Global Teacher*, Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.
- Klein, R. (1998) "Dream Ticket" in *The Times Educational Supplement* 2 October, Secondary pp. 16-17.
- Kuhn, T. (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* 2nd edition, University of Chicago Press.
- Kwong, J. (1997) "An American Perspective on Environmental Literacy: A New Goal for Environmental Education" in Aldrich-Moodie, B., and Kwong, J. *Environmental Education*, London: Institute of Economic Affairs.
- Lakatos, I. (1970) *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press.
- Lambert, D. (1995) *A Study of Prejudice with Particular Reference to Geography Education*, unpublished PhD. thesis, ULIE.
- Lambert, D. (1996) "The Choice of Textbooks for Use in Secondary School Geography Departments: some answers and some further questions for research" in *Paradigm*, No. 21.
- Lambert, D. (1999) "Geography and moral education in a supercomplex world: the significance of values education and some remaining dilemmas" in *Ethics, Place and Environment* 1: 2: 7-20

- Lawson, T. (1997) *Economics and Reality*, London: Routledge.
- Lawson, N. (1992) *View from No. 11: Memoirs of a Tory Radical*, London: Bantam.
- Lawton, D. (1973) *Social Change. Educational theory and Curriculum Planning*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Lawton, D. (1989) *Education, Culture and the National Curriculum*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Lawton, D. (1993) "National Curriculum: Professional or Ideological" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Lawton, D. (1994) *The Tory Mind on Education 1979-94*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Lawton, D. (1996) *Beyond the National Curriculum: Teacher Professionalism and Empowerment*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Lawton, D. (1996) "The Changing context: the National Curriculum" in Hodgkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Lawton, D., and Chitty, C. (Eds.) (1988) *Bedford Way Papers/33. The National Curriculum*, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Lee, N. (1986) "Putting the heart back into Economic man" in *Economics*, Autumn, pp. 92-95.
- Lee, N., and Entwistle, H. (1975) "Basic Education and Educational Theory" in Lee, N. (Ed.) *Teaching Economics*, (2nd Edition) London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Leonard, C., and Vidler, C. (1990) "Wessex Modular Business/Economics" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4, Winter.
- Levacic, R. (1987) "What Changes Should be made to the A-level Syllabuses for the 1990s?" in *Economics*, XXIV, No. 4, Winter.

Lewis, A. and Warneryd, K. (Eds.) (1994) *Ethics and Economics Affairs*, Routledge.

Lines, D. R. (1987) *Business Studies: The Search for a Paradigm*, M. A. dissertation, unpublished, London: ULIE.

Lines, D. R. (1988) "The Future Direction of Advanced level Economics" in *Economics*, Vol. XXIV, Part 2, No. 102, Summer.

Lines, D. (1990) "The Doppler Effect" in Pinto, M. & Carr, N. (Eds.) *Cases in Economics* Brentwood: Westbury Press.

Lines, D. R. (1997) "What's the Big Idea" in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 4 April. Economics and Business Supplement: 11.

Lines, D. R. (1997) "Give it a bit of thought" in *Times Education Supplement*, 13 June. Secondary Curriculum: 18.

Lines, D. R. (1998) "In Search of a Fresh Angle" in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 17 April. Economics and Business Supplement: 20.

Lines, D., Marcousé, I., and Martin, B. (1994) (1st ed.) *The Complete A-Z Business Studies Handbook*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Lines, D. & Vertigan, S. (1997) "Ethics, Economics and Economics Education" in Slater, S., Lambert, D., and Lines, D. (Eds) (1997) *Education, Environment & Economy: Research Issues* London: Institute of Education, University of London

Lines, D., and Wolf, A. (1996) *Strategies For Improving Instruction And Student Performance: A Report to the Accountancy Tuition Centre*, Unpublished.

Linton, R. (Ed.) (1940) *Acculturation*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Lipsey, R. G. (1963) *An Introduction to Positive Economics*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Livesey, F. (1986) "Whatever Happened to Economics" in *Economics*, Vo. XXIII, No. 2, Summer.

- London Examinations (1996) *Advanced Level/Advanced Supplementary Nuffield Economics and Business June 1996 Subject Report*, London Examinations.
- Longman (1993) *Nuffield Economics and Business Studies: Trial Material*
Memorandum to Project Team. February
- Madaus, G., Woods, E., and Nuttall, R. (1973) "A Causal Model Analysis of Bloom's taxonomy" in *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 10, pp. 253-262.
- Marcousé, I., and Lines, D. (first edition 1990) *Business Case Studies*, Harlow: Longman.
- Marquand, D. (1988) *The Unprincipled Society*, London: Fontana.
- Marshall, K. (1991) "NVQs: An Assessment of the 'Outcomes' Approach to Education and Training" in *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Autumn.
- Martin, J. (1994) *Left to Their Own Devices? An Investigation of the Value of Coursework as an Assessed Component in Business Studies Coursework*, Unpublished MA Dissertation ULIE.
- Marton, F. (1989) *Phenomenography and 'The Art of Teaching All Things to All Men'*. Paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Research Association, New Orleans.
- Marton, F., Hounsell, D., and Entwistle, N. (Eds.) (1984) *The Experience of Learning*, Scottish Academic Press.
- Marwell, G. and Ames, R. (1981) "Economists free note: Does anyone else?" in *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 15, No. 3, June, pp. 295-310.
- Maunder, P., Miller, L., Myers, D., and Wall, N. (1987, First Edition) *Economics Explained*, London: Collins Educational.
- MacGilchrist, B. (1993) "A Primary Perspective on the National Curriculum" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

- McCormick, B. and Vidler, C. (1994) *Teaching and Learning the New Economics*, London: Heinemann.
- McDonald, G. M., and Donleavy, G. D. (1995) "Objections to the Teaching of Business Ethics" in *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 14, pp. 839-853
- McSmith, A. (1994) *Kenneth Clarke: A Political Biography*, London: Verso.
- Midgley, S. (1997) "Choice Threatened as the future of A-level hangs in the balance" in *TES Extra*, April 4: I.
- Miller, J (1996) "Strengths and Weaknesses of Modular A-levels" in Dearing, R. *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds: Appendices*, SCAA.
- Moon, B (1990) *New Curriculum - National Curriculum*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- (MORI) Market and Opinion Research International (1996) *Survey of Members' views on Education and Training*, London: ICAE.
- Mouley, G. J. (1970) *The Science of Research*, New York: Von Nostrand.
- Mulberg, J. (1995) *Social limits for Economics theory*, Routledge.
- Munday, S. (1996) *Current Developments in Economics*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- Murphy, P. (1990) "TGAT: A Conflict of Purpose" in Horton, T. (Ed.) *Assessment Debates*, Milton Keynes: Open University.
- Naish, M (1996) "Action research for a new professionalism in geography education" in Kent, A., Lambert, D., Naish, M., and Slater, F. *Geography ion Education. Viewpoints on Teaching and Learning*, Cambridge: CUP.
- Naish, M., Rawling, E., and Hart, C. (1987) "The Curriculum Framework: a Basis for Change" in *The Contribution of a Curriculum Development Project to 16 -19 Education*, Harlow: Longman.

- Namafe, C. (1997) "Cultural Differences in Response to Environment" in Slater, F., Lambert, D., and Lines, D. *Education, Environment and Economy*, Institute of Education, University of London.
- National Commission on Education, (1993) *Learning to Succeed*, London: Heinemann.
- (NCC) National Curriculum Council (1990) *Curriculum Guidance 3: The Whole Curriculum*, York: NCC.
- (NCC) National Curriculum Council (1990) *Curriculum Guidance 4: Education for Economic and Industrial Understanding*, York: NCC.
- (NCC) National Curriculum Council (1990c) *History Non Statutory Guidance*, York: NCC.
- (NCVQ) National Council for Vocational Qualifications. (1993) *GNVQ Mandatory Units for Business*, London: NCVQ.
- (NCVQ) National Council for Vocational Qualifications. (1994) *Grading Advanced GNVQs*, London: NCVQ.
- (NCVQ) National Council for Vocational Qualifications. (1995) *NVQ Criteria and Guidance*, London: NCVQ.
- (NCVQ) National Council for Vocational Qualifications. (1995) *GNVQ Mandatory Units for Business*, London: NCVQ.
- Needham, D., Yeomans, B., Dransfield, R., Howkins, S. (1992) *Teaching Business Studies*, London: McGraw-Hill.
- Norwich, B (1993) "The National Curriculum and Special Educational Needs" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- (OFSTED) Office for Standards in Education. (Annual reports, 1993 - 96.) *GNVQs in Schools: Quality and Standards of General National Vocational Qualifications*, London: HMSO.

(OFSTED) Office for Standards in Education/Audit Commission. (1993) *Unfinished Business. Full Time Educational Courses for 16 - 19 Year Olds*, London: HMSO.

O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) (1993) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

O'Hear, P., and White, J. "Introduction" in O'Hear, P., and White, J. (Eds.) (1993) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Ormrod, P. (1994) *The Death of Economics*, London: Faber and Faber.

Owensby, W. (1988) *Economics for Prophets*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company.

Parker, R. H. (1978) "British Men of Account" in *Abacus*, June, pp. 53-65.

Parsons, C. (1996) "Economics and business in the curriculum: their changing roles" in Hodgkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.

Parsons, C., and Cain, J. (1989) *Investigating Business*, Harlow: Longman.

Passmore, B. (1998) "10 years on Ken's still very pleased with himself" in *Times Educational Supplement* 23rd. January.

Paxman, J. (1991) *Friends in High Places*, London: Penguin.

Peters, R. S. (1966) *Ethics and Education*, London: George Allen and Unwin.

Piderit, J. J. (1993) *The Ethical Foundations of Economics*, Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Pisanie, J. A. (1997) "Declining Enrolments in Economics" in *Royal Economics Society Newsletter*, March.

Pollard, A., Broadfoot, P., Groll, P., Osborne, M and Abbot, D. (1994) *Changing English Primary Schools? The Impact of the Educational Reform Act at Key Stage One*, London: Cassell.

- Popham, W. J. (1984) "Specifying the domain of content or behaviours" in Berk, R. A. (Ed.) *A Guide to Criterion-Referenced Test Construction*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Popper, K. (1959) *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Harper Torchbooks.
- Power, M. K. (1991) "Educating Accountants: Towards a Critical Ethnography" in *Accounting, Organisations and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 333-353.
- Pring, R. (1989) *The New Curriculum*, London: Cassell Education.
- Pring, R. (1992) *Changes in Curriculum and Assessment*, Unpublished paper.
- (QCA) Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, (1998) *Key Stage 4 Curriculum in Action*, QCA.
- Radnor, H. (1994) *Across the Curriculum*, London: Cassell.
- Raffe, D. (1992) *Participation of 16-18 Year-olds in Education and Training*, NCE Briefing Paper No. 3, National Commission on Education.
- Ramsden, P. (1988) *Improving Learning - New Perspectives*, London: Kogan Page.
- Ribbins, P (Ed.) (1992) *Delivering the National Curriculum*, Harlow: Longman.
- Riley, C. (1987) *Megatronix* Harlow: Longman.
- Robb, W. (1998) "What is Values Education and So What?" in *Journal of Values Education* Vol. 1, No. 1, 1-13
- Robbins, L. (1935) *An essay on the Nature and significance of Economic Science* (2nd edition), London: Macmillan.
- Robbins, L. (1954) *The Economist in the Twentieth Century*, London: Macmillan.
- Robbins, L. (1955) in *Economics*, Vol. LXV, No. 260, December.
- Robbins, M. (1987) Interview. 3rd. March. Transcript in author's possession.

Robinson, P. (1996) *Rhetoric and Reality: Britain's New Vocational Qualifications and its Centre for Economic Performance*, London: LSE.

Root, M. (1993) *Philosophy of Social Science*, Blackwell.

Rowe, G., and Whitty, G. (1993) "Five Themes Remain in Shadows" in *TES*, 9 April.

(RSA) Royal Society of Arts, (1998) *Advanced GNVQ Single Award. Business, Scheme Booklet. Pilot September 1998*, Coventry: RSA.

(RSA) Royal Society of Arts, (1998) *GNVQ and Key Skills Update*, Conference held at the Barbican Hotel, London 18 June.

(RSA) Royal Society of Arts, (1993) *Business : Intermediate and Advanced GNVQs*, Coventry: RSA

Sampson, A. (1992), *The Essential Anatomy of Britain: Democracy in Crisis*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1994) *GCE Subject Cores for Business Studies*, London: SCAA.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1994) *GCE Subject Cores for Economics*, London: SCAA.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1996) *GCE Results Analysis*, London: SCAA.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1997) *GCE A/AS Subject Core for Business Studies*, London: SCAA.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1997) *GCE Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary Examinations Subject Core for Economics*, London: SCAA.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1997) *GCE Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary Examinations subject core for General Studies*, London: SCAA.

(SCAA) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority Post-16 Briefing Team (1997) "Syllabus Provision" in *Post-16 Briefing Notes*, London: SCAA.

(SCDC) School Curriculum Development Committee (1987) *The National Curriculum 5-16. Response from SCDC*, London: SCDC.

Sen, A. (1987) *On Ethics and Economics*, London: Blackwell.

Senesh, L. (1978) "Hopes and Frustrations of an Economics Educator" address to the Joint Council on Economic Education and the National Association of Affiliated Economic education directors in the United States, reproduced in the Journal of Economics Educators. Fall: Insert.

Sherman, R., and Webb, R. (Eds.) (1988) *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods*, London: Falmer.

Shimahara, N. (1988) "Anthroethnography: A Methodological Consideration" in Sherman, R., and Webb, R. (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods*, London: Falmer.

Simkin, D., and Simkin, J. (Eds.) (1984) *Curriculum Development in Action*, Brighton: Tressell Publications.

Simon, J., and Kedsle, M. (1997) *Factors Affecting Selection and Trainee Chartered Accountants*, Department of Accounting and Finance, University of Hull: paper presented at the British Accounting Association Annual Conference, Birmingham.

Slater, F. (1996) "Illustrating Research in Geography Education" in Kent, A., Lambert, D., Naish, M., and Slater, F. *Geography ion Education. Viewpoints on Teaching and Learning*, Cambridge: CUP.

Slater, F., Lambert, D., and Lines, D. (1997) *Education, Environment and Economy: Research Issues*, Institute of Education, University of London.

Slater, J. (1991) "History in the National Curriculum: The Final Report of the History Working Group" in Aldrich, R. (Ed.) *History in the National Curriculum*, Bedford Way Paper. London: Kogan Page and IoE.

- Smith, R. and Standish, P. (Eds.) (1997) *Teaching Right and Wrong: Moral Education in the Balance*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham.
- Smithers, A. (1993) "All our Futures: Britain's Educational Revolution" *Dispatches*, Channel 4 Television.
- Smithers, A. (1998) "Is there a better way than A?" in *Times Educational Supplement* 7th August. p. 9.
- Solomon, R. C. (1992) *Ethics and excellence: Co-operation and integrity in Business*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stitt, S., Jepson, M., Paulson-Box, E., and Prisk E. "Industrial Pedagogy Rules the Curriculum" in *Values in the Curriculum*, Conference Papers Institute of Education. In print.
- Stones, E. (1966) *An Introduction to Educational Psychology*, London: Methuen.
- Strauss, A., and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research. Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, Newbury Park: Sage.
- Stray, C. A. "Classics in English Education" in Goodson, I. (Ed.) (1985) *Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum: Subjects for Study*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Surkes, S. (1987) "Business studies flagship course could founder" in *Times Educational Supplement*, 11 December p.10.
- Surridge, M (1994) *To what extent does the introduction of GNVQs represent a real change in education?* MA dissertation, University of East Anglia. Unpublished
- Surridge, M. (1998) Interview, 5th. April. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Talbot, M. and Tate, N. (1997) "Shared Values in a Pluralist Society?" in Smith, R., and Standish, P. (Eds.) *Teaching Right and Wrong: Moral Education in the Balance*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham
- Tate, N. (1998) Interview, 20th February. Tape recording in author's possession.

- Taylor, R. (1998) "Qualifying for Success. A Consultation on the Future of Post-16 Qualifications" in Dransfield, R. (Ed.) *GNVQ Today*, Issue 7, Summer. Hebdon Bridge: Peacock Press.
- TES Editorial. (1987) "Little Room for Enterprise" in *Times Educational Supplement*, 11 December p.2.
- Thatcher, M. (1993) *The Downing Street Years*, London: Harper Collins.
- Thomas, L. (1991) "A New Perspective on Learning - What does it mean for Economics?" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVII, Part 2, Summer.
- Thomas, L. (1992) "The Economics Education Project: Setting the scene" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVIII, Summer.
- Thomas, L. (1996) "Promoting Economic Thoughtfulness" in Hodgkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. (Eds.) *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Thomas, L. (1996) "Business Education into Working Life - Beyond Competence" in *Economic Awareness*, Vol. 8, No. 1.
- Tribe, J. (1994) "Core Skills and A/AS Economics: Some Survey Findings" in *Economic and Business Education*, Vol. 2, Part 2, No. 6 Summer pp. 84-86.
- Turner, R. K., Pearce, D., and Pateman, I. (1994) *Environmental Economics*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- (UCLES) University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (Undated) *AS and A level Business Subjects: Examination Syllabuses for 1996*, Cambridge, UCLES.
- (ULEAC) University of London Examinations and Assessment Council in association with The National Design and Technology Education Foundation (1994) *Advanced Level Business Studies (Revised Draft Modular Syllabus) 9076. 1996*, ULEAC.
- (ULEAC) University of London Examinations and Assessment Council, (1996) *Syllabuses 8127, 9125, 9126, 9127 for May/June 1998*, ULEAC.

- (ULSEB) University of London School Examinations Board (Undated) *Modular Syllabus (Mode 2 Ridgeway) Economics. Syllabus and Specimen Material*, ULSEB.
- Unwin, L. (1997) "Reforming the Work-Based Route: Problems and Potential for Change" in Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.
- Vertigan, S. A. (1996) *The New Economics - the case for ethics*, Unpublished M. A. dissertation. Institute of Education, University of London.
- Wales, J. (1990) *Investigating Social Issues*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Wales, J. (1995) *Poverty and Wealth*, Harlow: Longman.
- Wales, J. (1997) Interview. 27th August. Tape recording in author's possession.
- Wall, N. (1986), ""Drawing a line: What are the Limits at A-level?" in *Economics*, Vol. XXII, Part 3, Autumn.
- Wall, N. (1991), "The 16-19 Economics Curriculum" in Whitehead, D., and Dyer, D. (Eds.) *New Developments in Economics and Business Education*, London: Kogan Page.
- Wall, N. (Ed.) (1994) *Competition and Control*, Harlow: Longman.
- Wall, N. (Ed.) (1994) *Nuffield Economic and Business Student's Book*, Harlow: Longman.
- Wall, N. (Ed.) (1995) *Government Objectives*, Harlow: Longman.
- Wall, N. (Ed.) (1995) *Nuffield Activity Copymasters*, Harlow: Longman.
- Wall, N. (Ed.) (1995) *Nuffield Answer Book*, Harlow: Longman.
- Wall, N. (Ed.) (1995) *Nuffield Teacher's Resources*, Harlow: Longman.
- Wall, N. (1998) Interview. 23rd August. Tape recording in author's possession.

- Wall, N., Barnes S., & Wales, J. (1996) "Nuffield Economics and Business: Making Change Happen in the Classroom, 1991-95" in Walstad, W.B., (Ed) *Secondary Economics and Business Education. New Developments in the United Kingdom, United States and Other Nations*, London: Economics and Business Education Association.
- Wall, N., Barnes, S., Wales, J., and Lines, D. (1996) "Economics and business at A-level: An Integrated Approach" in Hodkinson, S., and Jephcote, M. *Teaching Economics and Business*, Oxford: Heinemann.
- Wall, N., Marcousé, I., Lines, D., & Martin, B., (1996) *The Complete A-Z Economics & Business Studies Handbook* London: Hodder and Stoughton
- Walsh, P. (1993) *Education and Meaning. Philosophy in Practice*, London: Cassell.
- Walstad, W. B., and Soper, J. C. (Eds.) (1991) *Effective Economic Education*, Washington, D. C.: Joint Council on Economic Education and the National Education Association.
- Walstad, W. B., (Ed.) (1994) *An International Perspective on Economic Education*, Norwell, Mass.: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Walstad, W. B. (Ed.) (1996) *Secondary Economics and Business Education. New Developments in the United Kingdom, United States and Other Nations*, London: Economics and Business Education Association.
- Ward, L. (1996) "Employers Prefer Academic Study" in *Times Educational Supplement* 8th March.
- Warnock M. (1978) *Ethics since 1900*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Watts, R. (1992) "History" in Ribbins, P. (Ed.) *Delivering the National Curriculum: Subjects for Secondary Schooling*, Harlow: Longman.
- Welford, R. (1984) "Broadening the A-level Syllabuses" in *Economics*, Vol. XX, No. 2, Summer.
- Wentworth, D. R., Hansen, W. L., and Hawke, S. H. (Eds.) (1977) *Perspectives on Economic Education*, New York: Joint Council on Economic Education.

- White, J. (1973) *Towards a Compulsory Curriculum*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- White, J. (1988) "An Unconstitutional National Curriculum" in Lawton, D., and Chitty, C. (Eds.) *Bedford Way Papers/33. The National Curriculum*, Institute of Education, University of London.
- White, J. (1988) "Two National Curricula - Baker's and Stalin's. Towards a Liberal Alternative" in Moon, B (1990) *New Curriculum - National Curriculum*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- White, J. (1993) "What Place for Values in the National Curriculum?" in O'Hear, P., & White, J. (Eds.) *Assessing the National Curriculum*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- White, J. (1998) "New Aims for a New National Curriculum" in Aldrich, R., and White, J. *The National Curriculum beyond 2000: the QCA and the Aims of Education*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- White Paper (1991) *Education and Training for the 21st Century*, London: HMSO.
- Whitehead, D. (Ed.) (1974) *Curriculum Developments in Economics*, London: HEB.
- Whitehead, D. J. (1985) "Values in Economics teaching" in Atkinson, G. B. J. (Ed.) *Teaching Economics*, Heinemann.
- Whitehead, D. (Ed.) (1988) *Trade-Offs. Simulations and Role Plays for Economics*, Harlow: Longman.
- Whitehead, D. (1994) "Economic Understanding in the United Kingdom" in Walstad, W. B. (Ed.) *An International Perspective on Economic Education*, Norwell, Mass.: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Whitehead D. (1996) "Economics and Business Education" in Gordon, P (Ed.) *A Guide to Educational Research*, London: Woburn Press.
- Whitehead, D., and Dyer, D. (Eds.) (1991) *New Developments in Economics and Business Education*, London: Kogan Page.

- Whitty, G., Rowe, G., and Aggleton, P. (1994) "Subjects and Themes in the Secondary School Curriculum" in *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 159-81.
- Wighton, D., and Kelly, J. (1997) "Row over training subsidies at accounts firms" in *The Financial Times*, 14th March.
- Willan, B. (1992) *Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project: Publishing proposals* Fax to team 5 June.
- Wolf, A. (1995) *An Assessment-Driven System: Education and Training in England and Wales*, ICRA Research Monographs No. 3, London: ULIE
- Wolf, A. (1995) *Competence-based Assessment*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Wolf, A. (1996) *The Tyranny of Numbers*, London: ULIE.
- Wolf, A. (1997) *GNVQ Assessment and Reliability*, Nuffield Foundation and the Further Education Funding Council.
- Wolf, A., Burgess, R., Stott, H., and Veasey, J. (1994) *GNVQ Assessment Review Project: Final Report*, Technical Report No. 23, R. and D. Series, Employment Department Learning Methods Branch.
- Wolf, A., and Silver, R. (1986) *Work-Based Learning: Trainee Assessment by Supervisors*, Sheffield: MSC, R. and D. Series, No. 33.
- Wood, A (1995) *Business Strategies. How are Decisions Made?* Harlow: Longman.
- Wood, R. (1991) *Competence Based Assessment*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Young, H. (1989) *One of Us. A Biography of Margaret Thatcher*, London: Macmillan.
- Young, M, (1997) "The Dearing Review of 16-19 Qualifications: A step Towards a Unified System?" in Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.

Young, M., and Leney, T. (1997) "From A-levels to an Advanced Level Curriculum for the Future" in Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (Eds.) *Dearing and Beyond*, London: Kogan Page.

Young, M. F. D. (Ed.) (1971) *Knowledge and Control*, London: Collier Macmillan.

Young, M. F. D. (1998) *The Curriculum of the Future*, London: Falmer Press.

Appendices

Appendix One: The Cambridge Business Studies Trust: Its Origins and Values.

Appendix Two: The Nuffield Economics & Business Project: A Chronology.

Appendix Three: GCE A-Level Economics and Business Studies Entries, 1956-1985.

APPENDIX 1

THE CAMBRIDGE BUSINESS STUDIES TRUST: ITS ORIGINS AND VALUES

A1.1 Introduction

In 1987 I wrote my MA dissertation on the origins of school-based business studies (Lines, 1987). It was called *Business Studies: The Search for a Paradigm* and as its name suggests, the emphasis was not on values and the development of young people. Nevertheless, in attempting to describe a 'paradigm' for the subject, it was inevitable that underlying principles would be explored and that certainly included the consideration of values. Looking back I can see how this early work began my interest in the subject of values and later, maturity as well; the key themes of the present thesis. This appendix is a distillation of one of the chapters in the MA, which was written around semi-structured interviews with those most closely involved in school-based Business Studies.¹

The business studies 'story' begins in the 1960s with the Cambridge Business Studies Trust, established by a grant from the Wolfson Foundation. It is an interesting example of curriculum development, not only because its genesis was in a single school in the independent sector, but also because it determinedly formed partnerships with state schools and in its early days especially, with industry. From its inception it formed a close link with an examination board, the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES), from which it drew its name. It was radical in a number of ways including pedagogy and assessment and on reflection it was also a good example of 'congruence' between certain societal values and those of the maturing young people who were studying it. The 1960s were years of relative affluence following post-war recovery. There was a feeling of confidence, based upon Keynesian demand-management government policies that ensured full employment, which was reflected in fashion and popular music. Heavy industry and manufacturing, whilst in decline were still important, and innovations such as the Mini, the Hovercraft and Concorde suggested that this type or sector of 'business' was the place to be, at least for some young people. The Cambridge course exactly matched this optimistic feel with its emphasis on management techniques that could provide 'answers' that would help pupils as 'decision makers', and this goes some way

¹ This, as we saw in chapter four, is different from BEC and BTEC Business Studies that was predominantly FE-college based.

to explain its early success. However, its emphasis on learning to become a 'decision maker' also gave the course a managerial feel, which for many was not relevant to their lives and values. Thus, when a competitor in the form of the AEB's syllabus came along, it attracted significantly more candidates, partly because its reduced mathematical content made it apparently 'easier', but also and significantly, because it took an approach more in line with the values of the 1970s and 1980s, years of industrial unrest, manufacturing decline and recurrent balance of payments crises, which culminated in the IMF loan of 1976. By then it was the AEB's syllabus that was 'congruent'.

I first taught the Cambridge syllabus in 1976 and became an examiner of both the Practical Project and the Case Study Paper. In 1988 I joined the Institute of Education, University of London, where from 1975 the Cambridge Trust had supported teacher-training in Business Studies. At that time of my appointment I was made Assistant Director of the Trust. I was also Chief Examiner for the AEB's syllabus and so I had a unique perspective of the contrasts between the two courses. In a number of ways the Cambridge Project taught me a great deal, amongst other things sowing the seeds for this thesis, but it also provided practical knowledge that I found especially valuable in my later work with the Nuffield Project.

A1.2 The Birth of the Cambridge Business Studies Trust: A Clash of Values

A-level Business Studies was started in 1965 at Marlborough College by the then Master, Professor John Dancy, with funding from the Wolfson Foundation. At that time Dancy was particularly concerned both with the poor reputation of business within schools and with curriculum innovation (Dancy, 1987). More pragmatically he recognised the need to project a forward looking image for Marlborough, but he also believed in "....studies that are both relevant and applied" (*ibid.*: 7). The fact that Marlborough was and is one of the leading independent schools is interesting in the context of values. The stereotypical view of the 'conservative' private school was not one shared by Dancy. He felt that the independent sector had a unique ability, even responsibility, to develop new areas:

"....one of my concerns has always been the justifiability of public schools, because I have some doubts....as to whether they ought to exist. My own position is that if they did not exist it would not be desirable or necessary to invent them. Given that they do exist, then they should justify themselves and defend themselves.

I have always felt very strongly that one of the ways they justify themselves is by curriculum development. They can, as in the case of this A-level....get the money. A maintained school could not get the money....I thought, and still think, that schools with the resources and the access to funds have a duty to engage in curriculum development." (*ibid.*: 12)

In contrast, Dancy believed that Leonard Wolfson's motives for setting up the trust were less 'pure'. He felt Wolfson was interested in producing "entrepreneurs" who were not "interested in a 'critique' of business" (*ibid.*: 4). This is a familiar theme, which has clear echoes in the vocation versus education debate, as we saw with BIS in chapter four and GNVQ in chapter six of this thesis. It also strikes at the heart of values. Dancy was happy to accept funding from Wolfson, but on his own terms; his ideas about the nature of education guaranteed a totally independent approach. From the beginning Dancy laid down the parameters, and those parameters were educational and not vocational. As David Dyer, the current Director of the Cambridge Project wrote of the course in 1979:

"A careful appraisal of the syllabus will dispel the prejudices about A-level business studies which are based upon the view that it is a vocationally orientated course. Clearly it is an educational one with a central theme in decision making through which it presents an academic challenge and develops problem solving skills. Such skills are similar to those developed by A-levels in general."

(Dyer, 1979: 121)

A1.3 The Context of the Curriculum Development

Whilst the underlying values were laid down by Dancy, as Headmaster he was not the person to become involved on a day-to-day basis. That task was passed to Richard Barker who was asked to undertake a 'feasibility study'. For the first six months of 1966 Barker was seconded to Shell International to work with one of their employees, Peter Neetch, in order to formulate ideas. From a curriculum point of view it was an apposite time. As Barker expressed it in 1974:

"It was a time when some flexibility was creeping into sixth form curriculum (syllabuses, materials, and examinations) whilst there was

considerable talk about the advantages of broader, interdisciplinary, courses. Relevancy was an over-used phrase, but many students were showing their desire for this through the patterns of their subject options. Businessmen and educationalists contrived, at last in discussion, to see the need for greater links at sixth form level, while in management education our two major Business Schools arose, along with a wider acceptance that there were business materials which could usefully be taught. Even the nature of the business material suddenly became a topic of great interest and clearly defined areas were emerging.

Around our own subject area, A-level economics was growing apace and suggested the possibility of developing educational courses even more closely affiliated to subsequent pursuits. Some sixth forms were also offering Law and Accounting A-levels, usually to their less-able students, as vocational courses, whilst across the fence there was the ONC/HNC in Business Studies made up from a series of isolated functional disciplines. Lastly, sixth form General Studies was being introduced with some emphasis being placed on understanding of business behaviour." (Barker, 1974: 179)

Despite this apparently favourable climate, Barker recalled a degree of cynicism that was apparent from a number of quarters at the time. This was especially true of the "Practical Project", which was an innovative feature of the course, requiring students to spend a prolonged period in a firm or organisation investigating a business "problem". There was a feeling "that it would be absolutely impossible for anybody (i.e. sixth form students) to go into industry and actually do a project" (Barker, 1987: 1).

As the development moved from a feasibility study to what was called the "experimental programme", the issue of values arose both in terms of the clientele who would pursue the course and in content. Dancy was concerned that the course should not be seen as public school dominated, and so he approached the Lawrence Weston Comprehensive School in Bristol, which agreed to participate. Their Head of Department, Laurie Beaton worked closely with Richard Barker to construct appropriate materials. A further concern was the issue of academic respectability. Dancy believed this was imparted through mathematical content. As he put it in 1987, "....the mathematical side of it....is the keystone of academic respectability" (*op. cit.* : 3) and

"....any A-level subject must aim to teach skills among other things and the skills of handling figures are transferable from the A-level in business studies and they rank as hard and respectable. The skills of writing and thinking about people....are regarded altogether as second-rate." (*ibid.*: 11)

There is no doubt that the Cambridge course was (and is) regarded as being 'hard' precisely because of its mathematical content and the lack of it in the AEB syllabus is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the latter's success (Barnes, 1993).

A1.4 Pedagogy

Another important value the course imparted was connected with pedagogy. Dancy wished to encourage "... the inductive approach (which) encourages class participation." (*op. cit.*: 2) and so Barker and his colleagues had to learn a new skill, that of teaching through case studies. As Jim Clifford, who was later to become a Director of the Cambridge Business Studies Trust at the Institute of Education, University of London said later,

"I can remember the first day I used a Case Study, which was quite alien to me, but I actually wrote it myself, and I felt confident enough to use it, because I wasn't using somebody else's. It was important for all of us to get through that barrier, because looking back we were actually breaking new ground." (Clifford, 1986: 15)

Because the project was new in content and new in the style of teaching it demanded, a difficulty arose when the experimental programme ended, and the 'development phase' began in September 1972. As long as the number of centres remained small, each one had been closely involved with development and dissemination (Joint Committee of Royal Economics Society, 1973); people knew each other personally, and communicated easily; the examination had been developed in close conjunction with the Cambridge Board; and quite simply the entry was tiny - only 10 candidates sat in 1969, 33 in 1970, and 50 in 1971 (DES). This was a situation that has echoes in BIS (chapter four). When the curriculum development is small its values and ethos can be transferred relatively easily, once it grows problems start to arise. When I started teaching the syllabus in 1976, the only resources we had were those supplied on Gestetner copies that were of highly variable quality both in content and legibility.

There was also little contact with the Trust; the examinations seemed and indeed were, dominated by a small group, most of whom had close connections with Marlborough. For someone new to the subject like me, it was very much a case of learning and setting standards, as you went along.

Nevertheless, when the School's Council had removed the course's experimental status in 1973 and granted it financial support for dissemination purposes, the praise was high:

"The course fulfilled its objectives in syllabus, content and methodology, in the design and execution of assessment by examination and by other methods, in the materials provided and projected, in the staffing and teachers development, in pupil motivation and experience." (quoted in Dyer, 1986a)

However, there still remained the problems of a relatively poorly trained teaching force - a majority of whom were, like myself, simply "converted economists" (Dyer, 1986b), a lack of published support material, and indeed, a course which itself lacked cohesion. In effect the pioneers had devised a course which didn't work. It was so exclusive that some pupils simply couldn't handle it, and so broad that it had no special place in the curriculum (Barker, 1974).

A1.5 The Decision making Model

The coherence of the course and its underlying values base came through the decision-making theme, which was 'discovered' by Barker (1987) and Clifford following work at the London Business School. Decision making is a way of looking at business, but is wider than that. As Clifford put it,

"...decision-making in itself is a thinking tool, it's not discipline related and therefore we felt that the argument of putting A-Level business studies into the school curriculum at the Sixth Form level was really based on two basic premises: one, you had an integrating theme which was challenging and stimulating and teaching kids the methodology of thinking which could be applied almost anywhere and not just to business studies. And the second point is....that we wanted to deliver a framework through the vehicle of business-related activities, because business-related activities are relevant, and

they are applied, and they will actually take kids into contact with outside the school." (*op. cit.*: 9)

So the values of the course came through the decision making framework. They were to do with encouraging thinking skills in general, which has resonance in the notion of thinking skills explored in chapter eight, and with an engagement with the real world outside the classroom. So successful was the notion of decision making as a way of providing cohesion to business studies course that it survives to this day in the A-level Business Studies Core, despite being over thirty years old. Its strength lies in its ability to explore issues of values, if applied sensitively, because decisions can be made from a variety of perspectives. Different stakeholders will clearly view decisions quite differently depending on their value positions. This is important to the business studies classroom. Unfortunately such sensitivity was not always shown. The emphasis on the application of technically difficult concepts often meant that the teaching of the syllabus was dominated by them. There was little room for reflection and other perspectives, which is why the course gained its reputation as the 'view from the manager's chair', which was inappropriate for many of the 'new' students in state sixth forms (chapter six).

A1.6 Assessment

Like the Nuffield Project, the way the course was to be assessed was regarded as critically important. As Clifford put it,

"What concerned us early on was that we might well have been moving to a position whereby we had a very interesting syllabus, some very lively featured materials, some very good teachers teaching very exciting things, only to have it killed dead when it came to the examination, because we had a standard paper with six essays." (*ibid.*: 12)

As a result of the need to be creative, two innovations were introduced. One was the Case Study Paper and the second the Practical Project. It is possible to draw parallels here with the Nuffield Strategy Question and the Portfolio. Indeed on reflection I am certain that in this, as in so many professional areas, I was influenced by what I had learned from researching the Cambridge Project and being its Assistant Director for a number of years.

A1.7 Conclusion

The Cambridge course, despite being innovative was not a total success, although its modular version, which we explored in depth in chapter six, has been. It probably suffered, as some curriculum development projects have in the past, from being first in its field. Its great rival the AEB's syllabus, which was created in 1973, was less concerned with the mathematical content that conferred 'academic respectability', because Cambridge had already established the subject's credentials by then. In the end the AEB devised a workable definition of business studies for schools and colleges built around a critique of business (Robbins, 1987), which is what Dancy, Barker, Dyer and others from the Trust had also believed in.

Despite starting from almost identical points, however, the two syllabuses diverged fundamentally in their practice. Whereas Cambridge was often regarded as essential managerial (Barnes, 1993: 44) the AEB in contrast offered "business aims and practices, seen from all points of view - of the consumer, the business and the employee" (Robbins, *op. cit.*). As Chief Examiner for the AEB, working alongside Martin Robbins who had established the syllabus and who was the long-standing chair of the committee that ratified the exam papers, I was able over a period of eight years to ensure that questions were asked that emphasised such topics and their underlying values, as we saw in chapter eight. The Cambridge examination, on the other hand, continued to emphasise statistical techniques long after they had fallen out of business use, at the expense, I believed, of questions that offered candidates the chance to critique the business world. It is a story that once again emphasises the points made throughout this thesis. As was mentioned above, in the 1960s the technocratic, scientific world of business appeared to offer increasing affluence and wealth for all. It was a time of optimism. A course that explained how such principles worked would chime with the values of those young people studying it. Increasingly through the 1970s such optimism faded, and with it the apparent relevance of the "difficult" and "over examined" (Barnes, *op. cit.* : 41) Cambridge course.

For me the lessons of Cambridge were both practical and philosophical. I learnt of the need to combine assessment in an integrated way with curriculum development, and of the ways innovations in assessment can help to encourage good pedagogical practice. I learnt of the need to publish good quality resources to support the initiative immediately, as well as having effective INSET. As a lecturer in business education at the Institute of Education I was prompted over a number of years to think of the maturity of the learner and the way it interacts with values, and by so doing to form

the idea of curriculum 'congruence'. All these thoughts provided a direct benefit to my work with the Nuffield Project; but they go further than that. Whilst none of them would have been prompted without the perspectives of personal involvement and continuity, they are also the direct result of my own and other's educational research, and therefore essential in my view to improving the quality of the education we provide for the next generation and beyond.

A1.8 References

Barker, R. (1974) "Lessons from the A-level Business Studies Project" in Whitehead, D. (Ed.) *Curriculum Developments in Economics*, London: Heinemann.

Barnes, S. (1993) "A-level courses in Business Studies" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 1 No 1 Spring.

Clifford, J. (1986) Interview. 8 December. Tape recording in author's possession.

Dancy, J. (1987) Interview. 23 January. Tape recording in author's possession.

(DES) Department of Education and Science (1972) *Statistics of Education, School Leavers*, HMSO

Dyer, D. (1979) "Business Studies, School and Community - Links with Industry" in *Economics*, Vol. XV, Part 4, Winter, pp. 121-125.

Dyer, D. (1986a) *Cambridge Business Studies: An Introductory Booklet*, Cambridge Business Studies Project.

Dyer, D. (1986b) Interview. 4th December. Tape recording in author's possession.

Joint Committee of the Royal Economics Society, the Association of University Teachers of Economics and The Economics Association (1973) *The Teaching of Economics in Schools*, Macmillan.

Robbins, M. (1987) Interview. 3rd. March. Transcript in author's possession.

Whitehead, D. (Ed.) (1974) *Curriculum Developments in Economics*, London: HEB.

APPENDIX 2

THE NUFFIELD ECONOMICS & BUSINESS PROJECT: A CHRONOLOGY

A2.1 Introduction

Chapter five offered an analysis the Nuffield Economics and Business Project from its inception to the present. As a participant observer I was able to bring a distinctive perspective to that analysis, but of necessity much of the detail of the methodology had to left out. This appendix fills some of that gap. It concentrates on a limited period, between 1991 and 1993, during which time all the basic principles were established, and on two areas, the course structure and publications. Both were of fundamental importance and both highly contentious. Despite general agreement, the structure revealed divisions within the project team on its detail. The second was a clash between the values and objectives of the team and those of the project's publisher. It is the intention that the information supplied here will indicate more precisely what I meant in chapter five when I referred to the "tortuous" nature of curriculum development.

A2.2 The Nuffield Team and New Technology

The formation of the Nuffield team: Jenny Wales, Nancy Wall, Stephen Barnes and myself was described in chapter five. Interestingly in terms of curriculum development, from the outset there was a physical separation in the team reflecting home locations, with Barnes and Wall based in the University of Sussex in Brighton and Wales and myself in London. The peripatetic nature of much of the Project's activities - which also included a great deal of home working - did not necessarily affect our efficiency, but it certainly added to the strain and gave us an interesting view on both the positive and negative aspects of the new technology that allowed it to take place. There were occasions, for instance, when one felt that had face-to-face discussions occurred, certain issues may not have grown in importance in the way that they sometimes did.

A2.3 The Impact of Personalities and Priorities.

Although the official start date of the Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project was 1 September 1991, the first Management Meeting attended by all four co-directors took place on 14 May. In a *de facto* sense, therefore, this marks its beginning. It is important to make some comments upon the nature of the team as it was constituted at that time, because it did have an impact upon some of the outcomes. As we have seen, both Wales and Wall were economists, intent on saving that subject. Their knowledge of, and interest in business studies was initially limited, and this tended to cause difficulties when the challenging task of creating a combined subject was undertaken. My 'semi-detached' role as part-time director added to the pressure, not only because I could not make the same commitment to the project as the other members, but it also left Barnes at times feeling somewhat isolated.

A further tension was caused by the fact that there was no single 'leader'. Although this encouraged a democratic feel, it hindered decision making, especially when issues were raised again and again that might otherwise have been ruled out of order. Furthermore, it created unease when one or other of the directors appeared to be taking on that role in meetings or in developing relationships with the Nuffield Foundation, publishers, examination boards and so on.

A2.4 Background Research

As we saw in chapter five, the early period was used to research other curriculum development projects in order to establish a methodology. On 5 September the team travelled to Northumberland where a distance learning package had been written for Business Studies A-level. There, the LEA had recognised that the size of the county made INSET both difficult and expensive, and so had seconded teachers to write a comprehensive text. It was not the kind of book that any of the team wanted for Nuffield, being in our view too prescriptive and lacking originality, but it was thorough and comprehensive in a way that few, if any business studies texts were at that time.

My notes of the meeting referred to "Resources → Guide for Students: this is the difficulty; what are you writing?" by which I meant to convey the challenge of preparing a text that either offered resources from which students could work or give them a detailed guide through each procedure, which was what had been written in Northumberland. I was in favour of the former, since my experience as a teacher had

led me to the conclusion that overly prescriptive texts formed a straight jacket that could stifle creativity - the very last thing we wanted for Nuffield. As chapter five showed, the issue of textbooks became one of our earliest challenges.

Also at the Northumberland meeting was Colin Parsons, then Business and Economics Inspector for Surrey LEA. Parsons had been one of the early team with Ben Kelsey at BIS and had written an innovative text himself (Parsons & Cain, 1989). He was keen to forge links across Surrey, with other counties,¹ and with the Nuffield team. Subsequently the county supported a number of teachers in the Project's development during the first year, including Peter Clarke from Godalming and John Dymott from Farnham sixth form colleges.

Following the visit to Northumberland it was decided that the team should research current curriculum developments and present their findings at a seminar to be held on Wednesday 25 September. Although BIS, BTEC and other syllabuses were examined, the most significant as far as the team was concerned, were the Ridgeway, Wessex and Geography 16-19 Projects. Their analysis can be found in chapter five, but further details are supplied below for Ridgeway and Wessex. Those for the third, being geographical, are not relevant here.

A2.4.1 The Ridgeway Project

The Ridgeway School in Wiltshire had a relatively small sixth form which meant that, because of limited resources, it was unable to introduce new A and AS levels. The school therefore established Mode 2 (initially Mode 3) modular courses in association with the University of London School Examination Board (ULSEB). The scheme covered a number of subjects: English, Religious Studies, Geography, History, French, Biology and Economics and was designed to allow A and AS-level teaching to run simultaneously. The courses were approved by SEAC for launch in September 1989 and were validated until 1995, although in fact ULSEB, which by then had been re-named London Examinations, withdrew the syllabuses early, in 1994.

The A-level economics course contained six compulsory modules, the first being "Introductory Economics: Basic Concepts and Tools of Analysis" (ULSEB: 4), which was common to both A and AS candidates and was taught at the start of the first year. Then, for AS candidates there were a number of alternative combinations of modules

¹ Parsons trialled some of the Northumberland material in Surrey and created links with Stephen Blowers, Business Education adviser to East Sussex, with whom both Barnes and myself had worked earlier.

leading to the award of either "Industrial Economics" or "General Economics" depending on whether they covered module 4, "An Industrial Study" (*ibid.*: 3) within their chosen set.

The Industrial Study was innovative as far as economics was concerned, but was similar to the Project which UCLES Business Studies candidates had been undertaking since the 1960s (see appendix one). It involved investigating "a real problem faced by (the) firm" (*ibid.*: 9) and an oral presentation "to a group of people comprising representatives of the firm and the school." This was not "part of the assessment, but....regarded as an essential part of the process for the student." (*ibid.*)².

Module E5 was entitled "Welfare Economics and Government" and involved assessment by coursework in the form of a report that should not exceed 2000 words. Candidates were offered a choice of three subjects: "Health Care in the UK", "Education in the UK" or "The Housing Market in the UK". They were expected to undertake both primary and secondary research in their chosen sector (*ibid.*: 15).

A2.4.2 The Wessex Project

The Wessex Project represented a more wholehearted attempt to bring together economics and business studies and so was of considerable interest to the Nuffield team. It was the direct outcome of TVEI work in Somerset, but was then taken up by Dorset, Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire (Leonard & Vidler, 1990:173). Like the Ridgeway Project, the Wessex scheme was developed by practising teachers who created a range of courses across a number of subject areas, in the case of Wessex, thirteen. They were progressively introduced in pilot form, with Business/Economics starting in 1989. The syllabuses were run by the Associated Examining Board (AEB), but like Ridgeway they were withdrawn early, in this case in 1994.

The Wessex Business/Economics course followed what came to be known as the "Y Front Model" (*ibid.*: 174), providing a common first year and then offering students the opportunity to proceed along either the "Economics Option" or the "Business Option" route. The first year was called the common core and comprised of four compulsory units, namely:

² The UCLES A-level Business Studies Project also involved an oral presentation, but this time to the external examiner. Speaking as one who examined this syllabus for many years, I found this part of the process amongst the most satisfying aspect of assessment I have ever been directly involved with. The examining board, on the other hand, were not as pleased. Travelling examiners are both expensive and difficult to organise.

1. Foundation. An introduction to the economic and business context within which consumers and producers interact and make decisions.
2. Income, Wealth and Expenditure - both from a business and a whole economy perspective.
3. Markets, People and Power.
4. Change. Related to both business and economic activity.

In addition, candidates followed two further modules. These were all examined at the end of the course at the insistence of SCAA (*ibid.* : 175).

In the second year candidates followed subject cores which were "more traditional and reflect(ed) the constraints, both real and imagined, placed upon syllabus developers by the exam board (AEB) and SEAC." (*ibid.*: 174). Thus module titles such as Marketing, People at Work, Business Organisation and so on were available from a list of nine in the Business/Economics Bank and three from the Law Module Bank. Leonard and Vidler's comments on the role of SEAC are particularly interesting in the context of the analysis made about SCAA in chapter five. It is clear that Wessex was constrained in its degree of innovation in a way almost exactly mirrored, later on, by our efforts at Nuffield.

The Ridgeway and Wessex Projects, as well as the others that were investigated in the early months all had an influence, not only in terms of subject content but also on the values that we wished to include in the finished work. Meanwhile, as the team was researching this background, a team of teachers was assembled to help with debates and considerations of content and pedagogy.

A2.5 The Teachers Advisory Committee

By September 1991, a team of practising teachers had been assembled to discuss issues and in particular, to help form the structure of the Project. Peter Clarke and John Dymott from Surrey have already been mentioned, but there were three others, all of whom I knew well. Ian Marcousé, then as now head of Business Studies at John Ruskin College, Croydon, was the author of a popular case study text book to which I had made a contribution (Marcousé & Lines, 1990). He became Chief Examiner for the AEB's A-level Business Studies syllabus after I left that particular post. As this background suggests, he was (and is) a great enthusiast for business studies; far less so for economics.

Barry Martin represented the Independent sector. At the time he was a senior teacher at Mill Hill School in London, having run the economics and business studies department there for many years. He did not attend meetings consistently, and early in 1992 he was appointed to a Headship in Liverpool, thereby cutting short his services to the Project.

Lynda McKenzie taught at Richard Hale School in Hertfordshire. She represented the 'best' kind of economics teacher, proving that with verve and enthusiasm the subject could be taught in an interesting and lively way. The Project developed close links with Hertfordshire,³ building on the INSET work I had done there over several years with Linda's husband, Ken, who was the county's Business Studies adviser.

Along with the co-directors, this committee met on alternative Wednesdays throughout the first year, where it provided a sounding board for the work that the team had done in the intervening period. I did not feel it was a success. Rarely did the teachers bring forward their own contributions; instead they felt happy, perhaps even obliged to criticise what was put in front of them. This was a quite natural reaction, but within the team we began to feel increasing frustration, perhaps bordering on resentment when our efforts were continuously torn to shreds by a committee whose purpose, we felt, should have been to be more constructive.⁴ On the other hand, the teachers did act as a buffer when one or other of the directors went in a direction, on content structure or even philosophy that might be termed 'idiosyncratic'. Lynda McKenzie wrote after one of these meetings,

"We seemed to finish the last meeting on a more negative note than usual..."

and

"There is also a lot of common and "safe" ground which is very enjoyable to cover i.e. the teaching paradigm. However, I did start to become confused when we were asked to make 'decisions' because I was unsure of what decisions had already been made.

I realise the questions may still be difficult to answer but I hope they illustrate that it was not an intention to be deliberately negative, but a

³ Links were also forged with other LEAs, notably Camden, Cheshire, East Sussex and Staffordshire. Their main function was to trial material in classrooms as it was written.

⁴ One happy outcome, however, was a book co-authored by myself, Ian Marcousé and Barry Martin called *The Complete A-Z of Business Studies* (Lines: 1994).

request to know present thinking on areas mentioned." (McKenzie, 1991)

A2.6 The Consultative Committee

In addition to the teacher-team, a consultative committee was also drawn up under the chairmanship of Professor Robin Matthews, Master of Clare College, Cambridge. Other members included Stuart King, Senior Economist at B.P., Professor Keith Lumsden, Director of the Esmée Fairbairn Research Centre at Heriot-Watt University, Professor David Myddleton from the Cranfield School of Management and Chair of the Cambridge Business Studies Trust, Mrs. Rhona Seviour, County Adviser for Technology at Hertfordshire County Council, Ms. Wendy Sterling who represented a link with the Economics Association, Brian Stevens, Director of the Banking Information Service and finally Angus Taylor, TVEI Adviser for the Department of Employment. Later on the committee was expanded to include representatives from the publishers, Longman, the examination board, London Examinations and British Steel, who made a financial contribution to the Project.⁵

The committee acted as final arbiters in our activities, but had little influence on day-to-day matters. However their comments did carry weight. In November 1992 a letter from Keith Lumsden, who had personal experience of a development project⁶ expressed concern that the timetable for the course did not allow enough space for checking and cross checking the work. It was therefore agreed that the publication date should be delayed until January 1995. This carried financial implications for the Foundation, which it accepted.

A2.7 The Langrish House Conference, October 1991

By the second of October - a month into the Project's existence - one of the tensions surfaced that remained an issue throughout the time I was with the team. Stephen Barnes was determined to resist pressure to make decisions on fundamental matters which had not, in his view, been thoroughly thought through (see chapter five for extracts from Barnes's paper, *Why does the Nuffield Economics and Business Studies*

⁵ In addition to the consultative committee, the Royal Economics Society set up a special advisory committee under the chairmanship of Alan Hamlin.

⁶ This was "Running the UK Economy", a fully integrated IT simulation designed for school use in schools. It remains one of the most popular of all software packages used in economics. (Hurd, 1995)

Project Need a Debate about Fundamental Issues? [Barnes, 1991a]). On the other hand Longman, the project's publisher, were understandably keen to get the structure of the course sorted out as quickly as possible so that writing could begin. At the Management Committee meeting of 2 October there was a reference to Longman publicising the Project's 'synopsis' paper, which was at that stage really little more than a collection of draft ideas. Despite its formative nature, Longman wished to press ahead and 'prime' the market.

It was obvious from the first few months that the directors were working to a very tight deadline and that Ashley Kent's year of brainstorming and reflection was apparently a luxury we could not afford. Both Wall and, especially Wales were more pragmatic than Barnes when it came to discussions surrounding paradigms, values and so on, and felt that it was important to start writing and trialling as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, it was agreed to hold a week-end residential conference on 5th and 6th October at Langrish House near Petersfield, Hampshire, not only to attempt to solidify our thinking, but also to be creative and imaginative in a context away from the pressures of day-long meetings. Langrish House provided an opportunity to discuss fundamental issues, and some of the papers presented were of particular significance to this thesis.

On 2 October 1991 Stephen Barnes presented a discussion paper in advance of the Langrish House meeting (Barnes, 1991b). A number of points were of particularly interest. He started by declaring that "We can probably all agree on the broad liberal values of truth, impartiality towards evidence, honesty, open-mindedness, tolerance and academic freedom." I have no doubt that he was right in that assumption, but it does indicate the team's underlying value set. Of similar ages, we all went to University during the late 1960s and early 1970s and perhaps as a result, hold broadly left-of-centre views on education and some other issues (though by no means all), which the disinterested reviewer of the Nuffield materials may detect from the writing.

Barnes paper, called *A is for Alienation, Art and A level.*, was discussed in chapter five (Barnes, 1991b). As we saw, he made a distinction between some art students and the majority of those studying business. He drew everyone's attention to the way so many A-level art students appear to have an entirely different view of their studies. It was as if the subject matter was a part *of* them. They did not regard art as work and so if they saw something or somebody that interested them they noted it, perhaps even sketched it and retained the result for future reference; certainly they *thought* about it. In contrast Barnes reminded us of his A-level business studies students doing an

apparently straightforward and interesting case study on the launch of a well known chocolate bar. Their answers worried him: "Why....were their answers so brief and non-committal? More obviously, why did they seem unable to offer relevant and logically consistent answers to essentially simple questions? How were they able to handle quite complex statistical techniques, yet not be able to think analytically about a far more everyday problem?" (Barnes, 1991a: 1).

Barnes wrote that students failed to engage: "...what is needed is a deeper and more subtle knowledge that arises from an empathetic entry into the subject's essential ambience, its codes and contours of enquiry." (*ibid.*: 2) Students are not helped, he argued, by their lack of a "developed academic infrastructure" which meant they could not classify new information: "Many students suffer from a chronic knowledge over-load. This does not occur though any inherent inadequacy, but because they lack this infrastructure to sort and accommodate incoming ideas." (*ibid.*: 4) In the end he argued for a kind of art education and expressed it as colourfully:

"The students must become explorers. The package tour that is the A-level syllabus is not sufficient. They have enough snapshots along that road. Excitement, insight and beauty are to found in places unmarked, and to encourage forays into such areas is the prime task of the teacher. The alienation silently - even sub-consciously - felt by many students breeds within the prosaic confines of the crowded buses to A-level. Teaching too easily becomes the predictable prattle of the experienced company courier. Rather it should be an incitement: a relationship of challenge, a story to be continued. The students are not tourists but travellers. Their eyes must constantly be averted, their thoughts formed and reformed. Visions of places never visited; a surging of anger and a bursting of joy; the ignition of ideas everywhere. If it is to be education, then it cannot be less." (*ibid.*: 10)

At 3.30 p.m. on Saturday 5 October the schedule of activities allowed space for everyone to walk around the grounds of the House to discuss the day's activities up to that point. It was there that Stephen Barnes and myself created the notion of a portfolio - the word itself borrowed from art - designed to capture some of the thoughts he had outlined in his paper. The idea of a continuous piece of work throughout a business studies course was not original - it existed in BIS and SEG's Core plus Option GCSE - but it was unusual at Advanced level, and the one which we envisaged was quite different. Our dream was of something which provided evidence

of a complete intellectual involvement with the subject. It could be constructed from anything and everything that suggested a critique of the worlds of economics and business: from the mundane newspaper article or a newly designed sweet wrapper, to a detailed analysis of a factory visit or a talk given by a local bank manager. Ultimately and largely as a result of SCAA's intervention, as we saw in chapter five this vision was not brought entirely to fruition.

At the end of the week-end some questions had been answered but many more raised. With hindsight, however, it was one of the few times when everyone had the chance to raise their sights beyond the pragmatic. The simple reality was, however, that practical problems still had to be addressed - we were under pressure to start writing both texts and examination syllabuses as well as trialling material once it was written. We also had to set up and run committees, work with teacher groups in London and elsewhere around the country, create and disseminate publicity and so on. The problem was that everything was running virtually simultaneously and yet the debate over the exact details of course structure, textbooks and wider issues were still to be resolved, and it is to these we now turn.

A2.8 The Course Structure and its evolution

A2.8.1 Modularity

When I was first approached with a view to joining the Project team it was supposed that the structure of the course would be wholly modular, mainly on the grounds that modularity was gaining in popularity. I was somewhat unfashionably, opposed to this. I believed that a two-year course in either economics or business studies benefited from being precisely that; both subjects were holistic in nature, especially the latter, and needed time for that perspective to become clear to the students.

I had discovered from reading many hundreds of A-level business studies scripts over the years that poorer candidates, even in a course that was not sub-divided, tended to pigeon-hole their answers into Marketing, Finance, Accounts and so on. They would identify questions as being exclusively about one of them and simply disregard facets concerning other aspects of business decision making. I did not want such a situation worsened by what I believed to be artificial sub-divisions of economics and business, divisions that would in turn suggest to the students that this was the way the subjects should be studied.

I was also conscious of another attempt at modularisation, namely the UCLES Modular A-level in Business Studies (0961) that sat alongside the original 'linear' syllabus discussed in appendix one. Although the so-called "The Double Module" attempted to bring all aspects of business together, in practice because it was the first module encountered, students were not sufficiently familiar with the content at that stage to get an overview. In addition, the way the subject was divided up made it possible for candidates to avoid certain areas such as Accounting and Statistics, which were perceived by many as 'difficult',⁷ a situation that I regarded as quite unsatisfactory. Furthermore, the Nuffield team was attempting to bring the two subjects together and endeavouring to avoid the Wessex "Y front" approach, since that simply maintained a division. On the other hand we were aware that one of our main markets was going to lie with disillusioned or 'threatened' teachers of economics who would want to offer their students an A-level in that subject. It was a difficult conundrum that exercised our minds over many weeks. In the final course structure a degree of modularity was maintained in order to satisfy our different client groups, but terminal assessment after two years remained in place, as well as coursework.

A2.8.2 Designing the Structure

As we saw in chapter five, the notion of the maturing learner was embedded in the course structure from an early stage. For instance, although the idea of an 'Introductory Zone' to bridge the gap between GCSE and A-level was ultimately abandoned, it remained in place for a considerable time. It was built into Jenny Wales' original proposal for a course structure that was used as a possible template from September to December 1991 (Figure A2.1). She likened the structure to a coffee bean tree, with a solid trunk running through the course that would be the core, with modules leading off. The core would contain the essential concepts, but the modules would lead into different contexts. All students would start with the Introductory Zone and then proceed up the core encountering matched modules along the way, split between economics and business studies. In the second year there would be a choice of three from six modules. The outcome - an A-level in economics, business studies or economics and business studies would be determined by the choice of modules.

⁷ I was the Reviser for the UCLES Modular Business Studies in its first two years and so had first hand knowledge of its shortcomings - as well as its considerable advantages. The structure of the course has now been altered to prevent the avoidance of certain areas, and SCAA (QCA) have introduced guidelines on modular courses that specify, amongst other things, the contribution and weight of the final examination as opposed to the modules examined during the course.

COURSE STRUCTURE

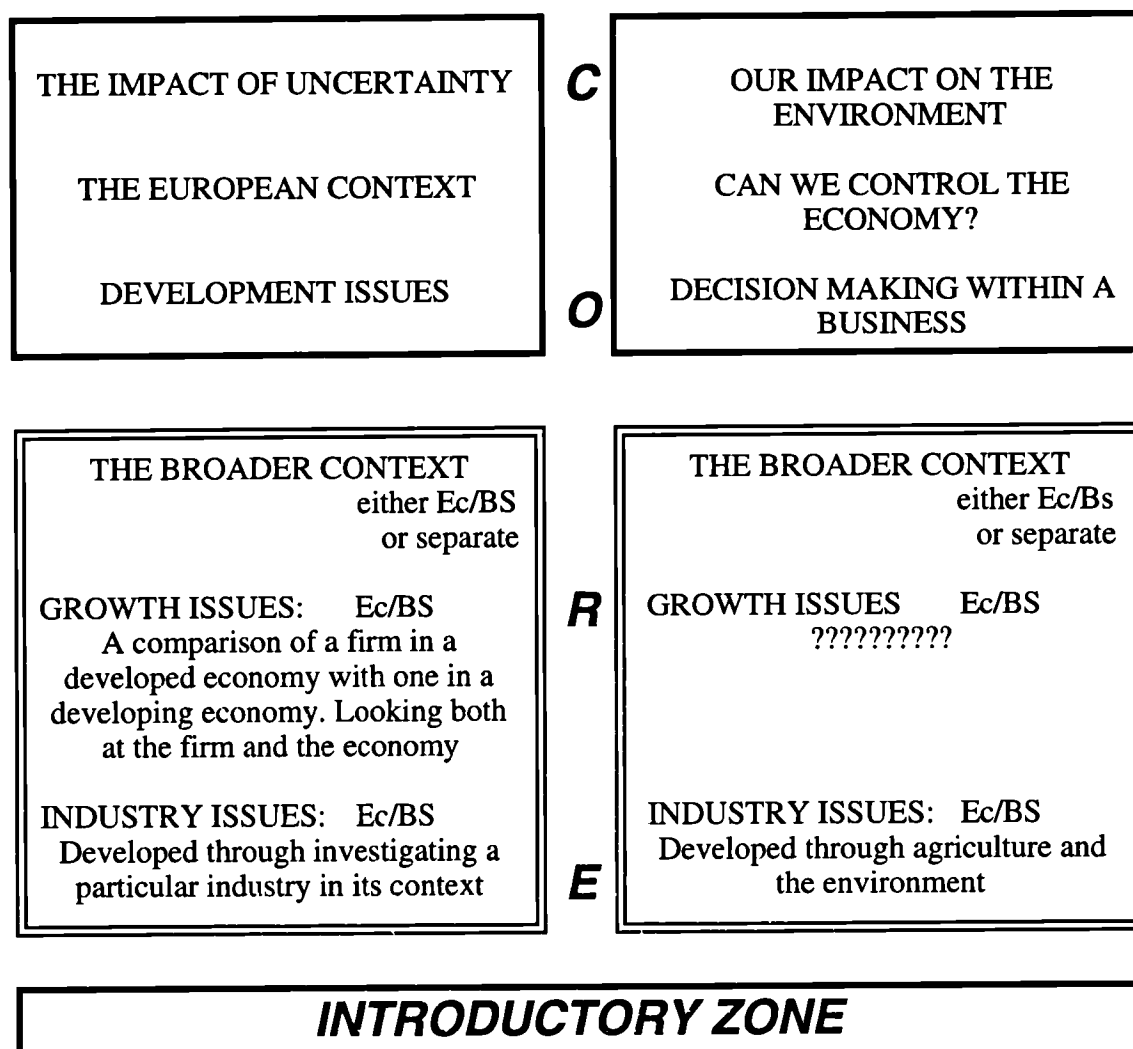


Fig. A2.1 Course Structure proposal, September to November 1991

One document supporting the coffee bean idea showed a number of themes that were to become central to the final curriculum (Wall, 1991). The word *integration* was used to describe the connection between the core and the modules, which was to be maintained by the use of "integrative case studies". In the final structure *Integration* was one of the core themes, although perhaps with a slightly modified meaning (that of integrating the two subjects of economics and business), and case studies were used at the end of each Stage in the Student text to integrate all the learning found there. Within the description of a module the phrase *field of enquiry*⁸ was used. This became *Investigation*, which not only was much simpler, but also indicated that students had

⁸ The team's attention was drawn to the notion of "Aesthetic Fields" in education by an article written by Peter Abbs "Towards a Coherent Arts Aesthetic" in Abbs, P., 1987 *Living Powers: The Arts in Education* 52-64

to take responsibility for their learning. There were other important contributions in terms of terminology. The "Fundamental Ideas" list in the document was one of the earliest attempts to examine the basic theories and concepts that we considered had to be included in order to retain the integrity of both economics and business studies. There was also a list of so-called "Longitudinal Themes", which were intended to be all-pervasive. The fact that they were themes rather than specific content items was a problem, but in the finished course it was possible to say that each one received more than adequate attention.

Unfortunately, however, this first structure was far too complicated, and the relationship between the core and the modules, ill defined. This was partly because of a debate over contexts. Jenny Wales, as we had observed from her textbook, was eager to contextualise learning, something which everyone on the team supported. The extent of contextualisation was, however, open to debate. Wales believed that theory could be almost exclusively acquired through the context. With typical ingenuity she had discovered an organic farmer in the West Country who was willing to have his detailed financial accounts and other business information published. This made it an ideal case study and so she set about writing it into the course. This had ramifications for the textbooks, as we shall see below. In the meantime it became a possible illustration of the way the course structure would function in practice.

Figure A2.2 shows how fast things changed. By December, Jenny Wales had produced a new document showing an introductory zone lasting only four weeks (the length of the original was never precisely specified), which then led through four levels into modules to be studied in year two.



ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS STUDIES

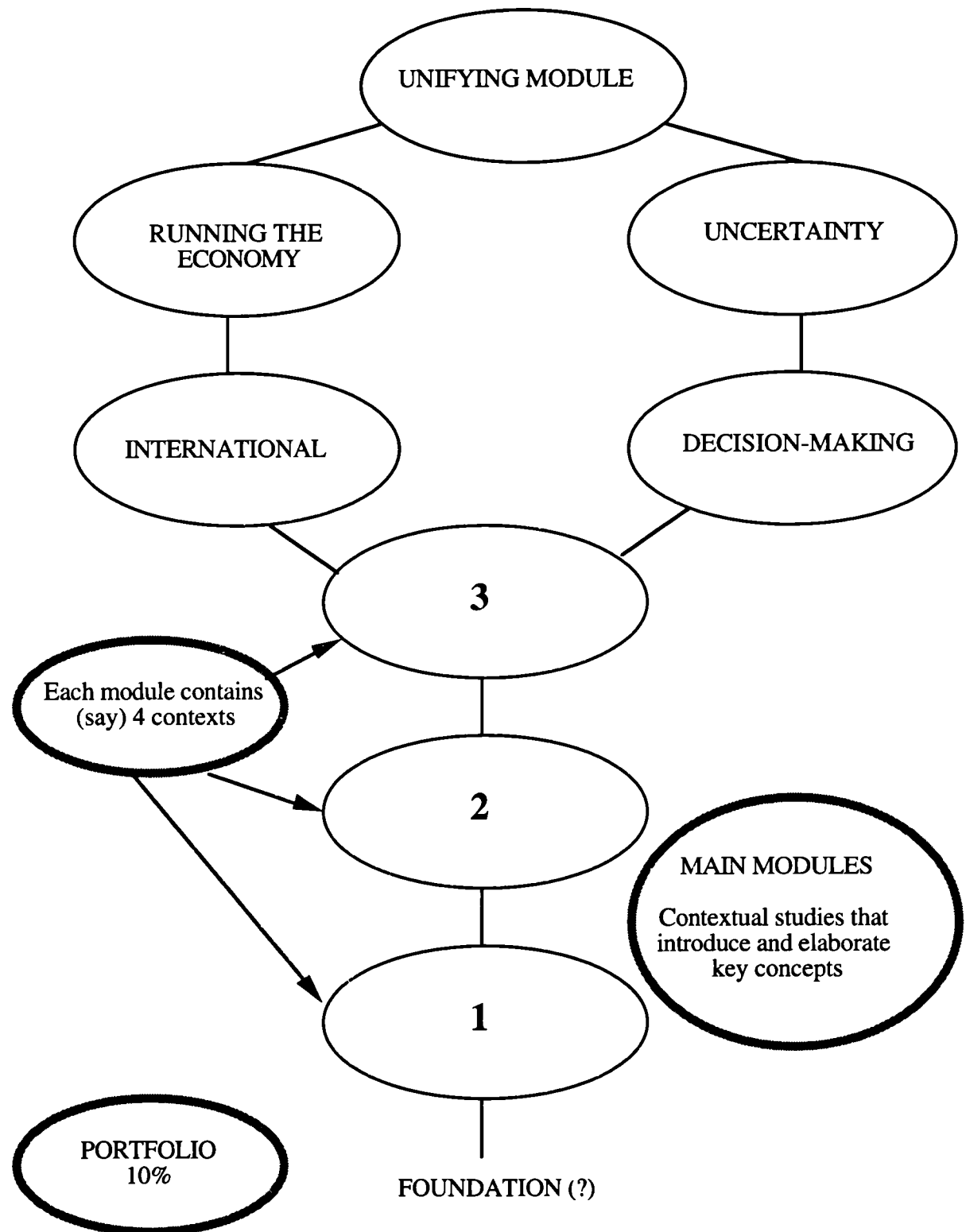


Fig. A2.3 Stephen Barnes's notion of a modular framework, December 1991

The logic of the December structure was to look at business from the inside i.e. in a somewhat mechanistic manner, in the way that business studies tends to, and then to look at it from the outside in a more detached way, similar to that of economics, and then to combine these approaches in level three. The fourth level was a real innovation, and something of a breakthrough. The word *Uncertainty* appeared for the first time, and it became a target to find something similar for the other levels. So, as one can see from my annotations on the right-hand side of Figure A2.2, by 14 January 1992 we had added titles to the other levels, namely *Objectives*, *Efficiency*, and *Expansion*.

By 4 February further progress had been made with the structure. There were two major differences from the December document. First is the inclusion of the headings to each of the levels and second the three questions within each level (previously the module titles had, by common agreement within the team, been referred to as 'blobs' in order to avoid any suggestion of preference towards any individual's view of what the structure should eventually become⁹). The questions built upon the notion of investigation for the final modules as outlined above, but these same "final modules" were not as 'fleshed out' as in the earlier version.

By this time the idea had developed that certain combinations of modules would result in different outcomes. It is interesting to note that there was uncertainty as to whether or not SCAA would allow the use of a combined subject title, "Economics and Business", to appear on certificates (which in the event they did). Another change in the structure diagram was also about to take place. At the Management Meeting of 7 February the term "level" was questioned. It was suggested that it implied assessment and made a bad fit with GNVQ; the search therefore began for a new term.

On 24 February a discussion paper entitled "The Course Structure" was written, which represented the views of the whole team at that time. It is clear from this paper that the philosophy was by then firmly embedded, although the first newsletter issued by the Project team (Nuffield, 1992a) still contained an introductory zone, renamed a "Foundation Stage". This was the first time the word "Stage" appeared in the documentation, but it was not firmly established. In the "Course Structure" document

⁹ However, although the publicity suggested everything had been settled, that was not in fact the case. I have a hand-written note from a team meeting dated 18 February where I wrote "What is a blob?", which showed two alternatives, a single story line as favoured by Jenny Wales and "granular" which was Stephen Barnes'.

dated April 1992 both the "Introductory Zone" and "Levels" remained (Figure A2.4), but all the questions were in place including those for the final option modules.

STRUCTURE

OPTIONS

CHOOSE TWO OF SIX

EG

INEQUALITY: CAN WE CONTROL THE ECONOMY: PRODUCTIVITY:
DIAGNOSTIC FINANCE

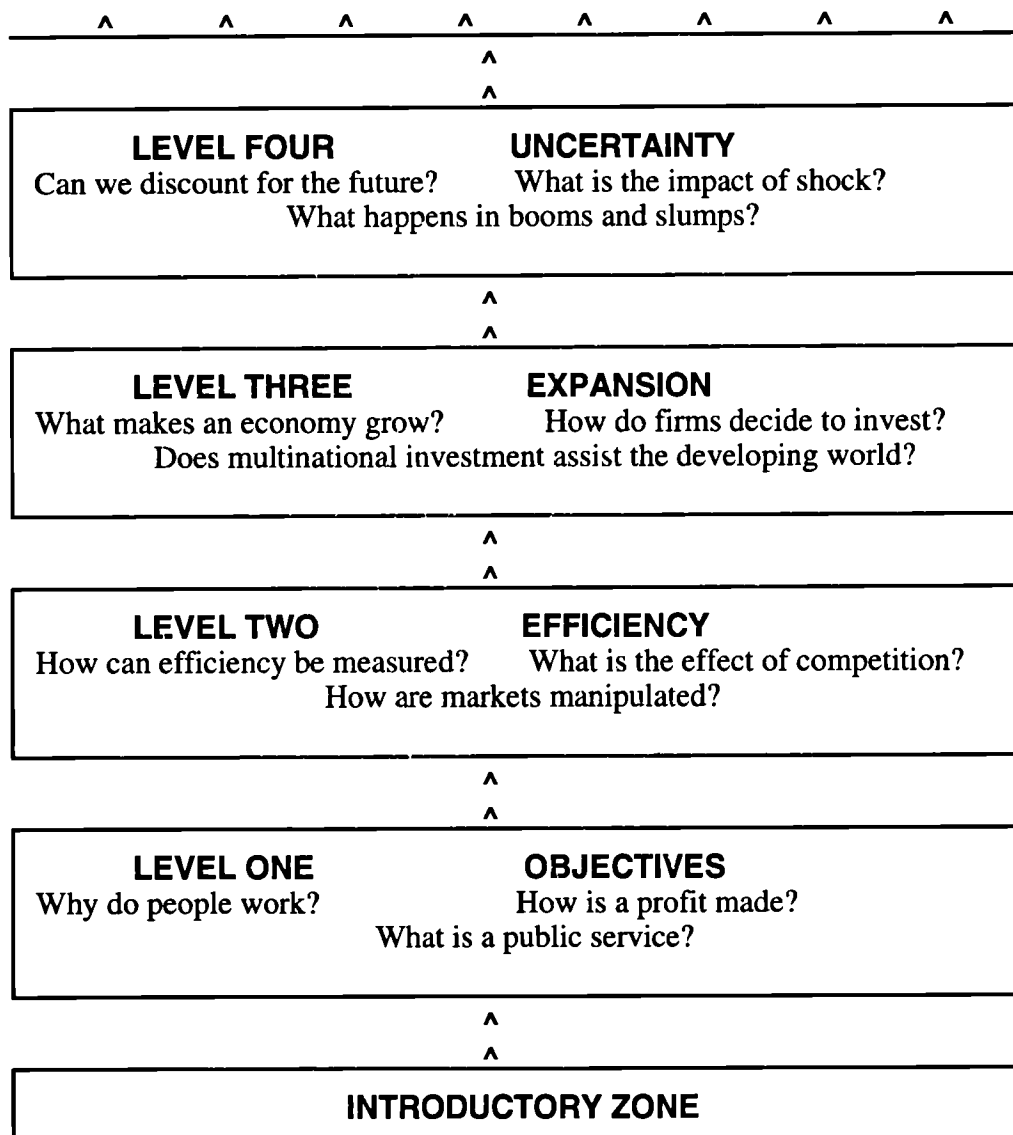


Fig. A2.4 Course Structure proposal, April 1992

The management meeting of 14 May marked the end of a separate Introductory Zone; instead it was integrated into Level One. The minutes of the meeting recorded that its "actual content would depend on the teachers assessment of the various students' subject knowledge." (Nuffield, 1992d) At the same meeting it was also agreed to change the word 'level'. Five days later a hand-written 'Stage diagram' was composed by Stephen Barnes which is almost the final version (Figure A2.5).

The structure had been turned on its side and the examination outcomes specified. By the September newsletter the details were virtually complete. The word "level" was replaced by "Stage", the main headings "Exploring" and "Options" became "The Course" and "The Options" and some of the question titles were changed, again to remove jargon laden expressions. Thus, "How is Value Added" became "How is a Profit Made?"; "What is a Public Service" became "What Should the State Provide" and "How is Demand Supplied" became "How do we Increase Efficiency?" (Figure A2.6).

The final version appeared in the Course Structure document of November 1992 (see Figure A2.7). The heading "The Course" was renamed "The Stages" and a new heading "The Outcomes" was added. The order in which the questions appeared in Stage Three, as well as the titles and orders of the options in the September document were slightly modified and the suggested time of ten weeks for each of the Stages, removed. Note that this version did not include any reference to the way the course was to be assessed, as in the one shown in chapter five (Figure 5.1, page 121).

It may seem ironic, therefore, that the year that Ashley Kent said it took the Geography 16-19 Project to organise their course structure was almost exactly matched in the case of Nuffield. However, whilst the debate over the structure carried on, the team was simultaneously working on other matters, one of the most important being textbooks, and it is to that challenge we now turn.

Course Structure

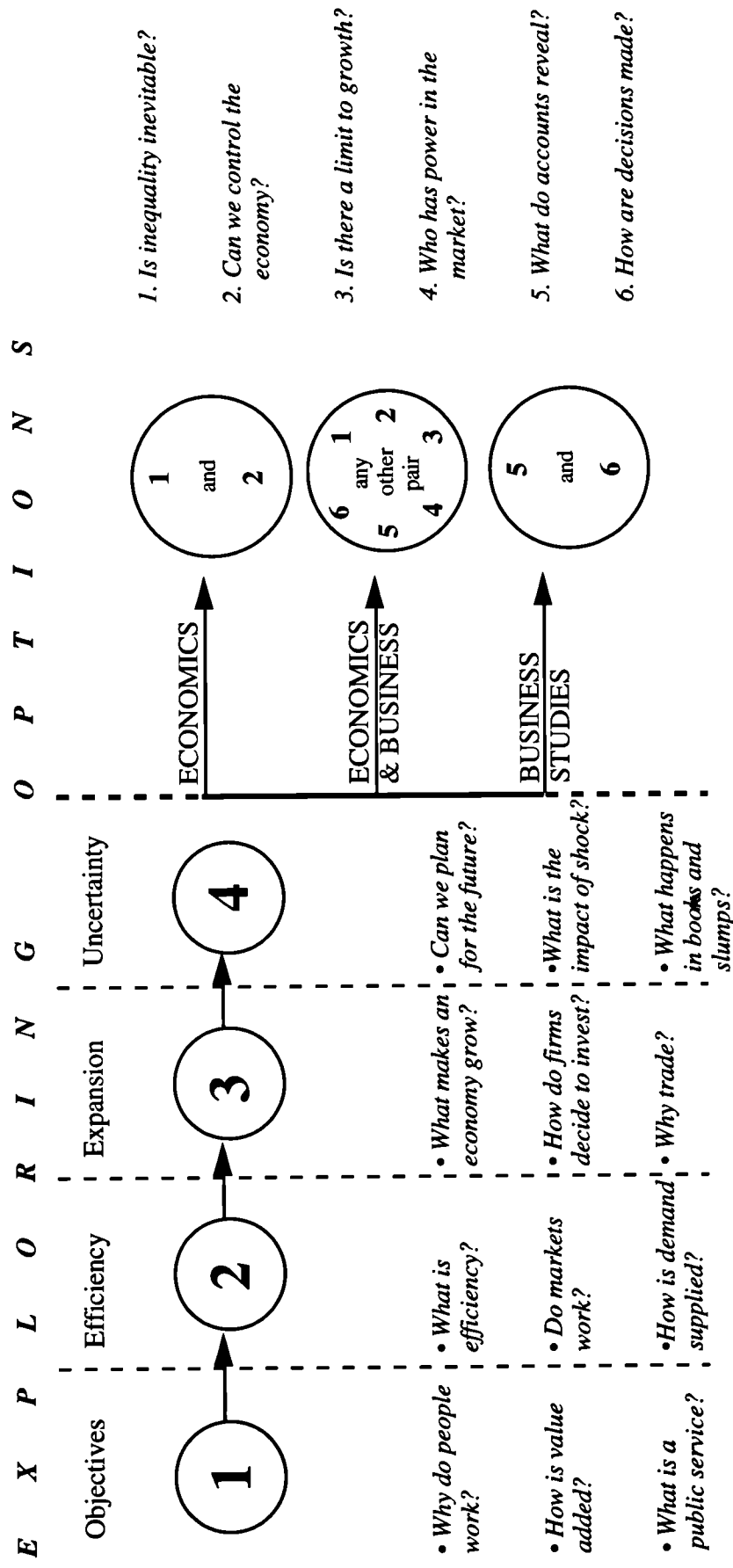


Fig. A2.5 Barnes's Structure diagram May 1992. Originally hand-drawn

Nuffield Business and Economics Project: The Course Structure

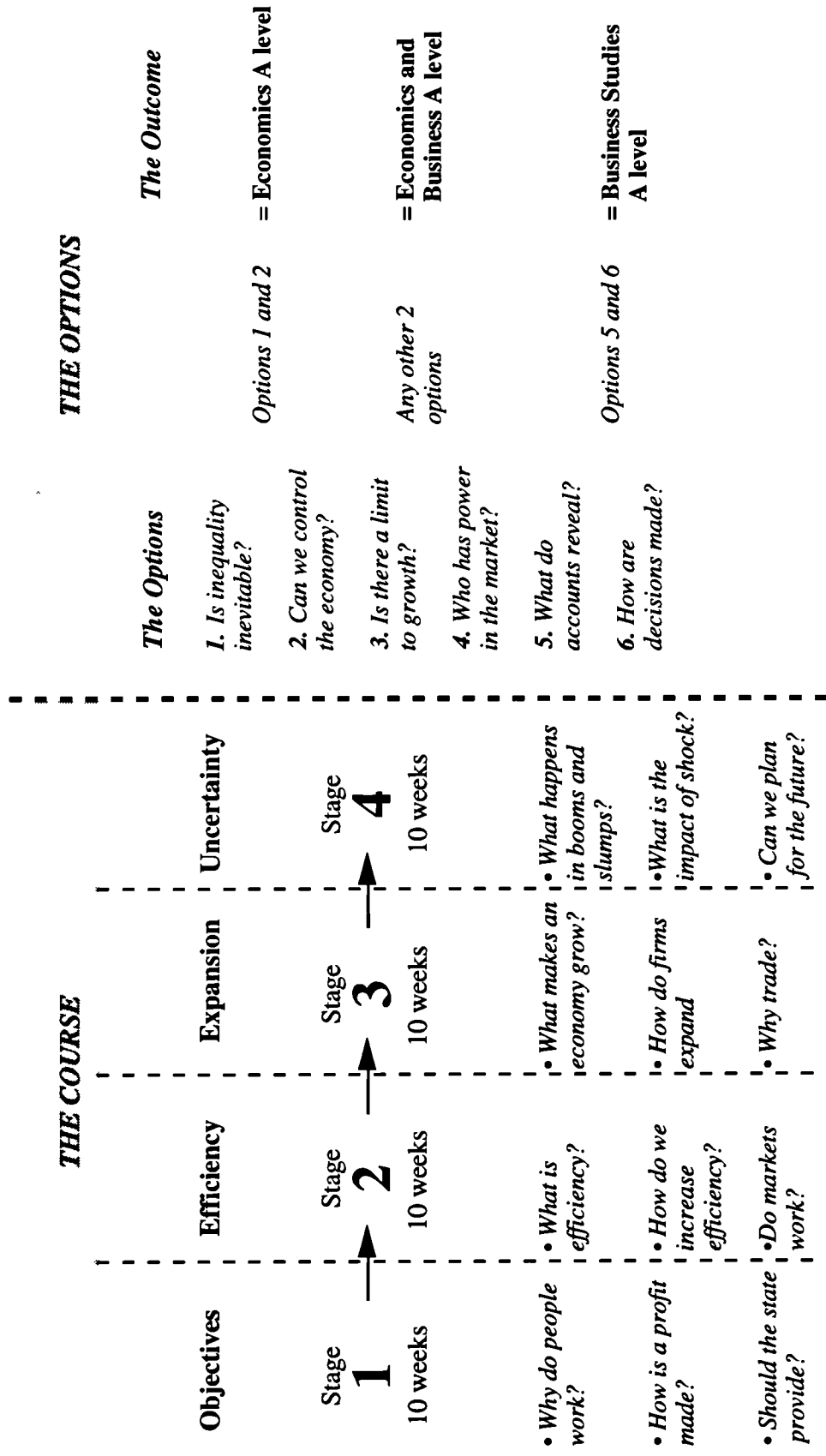


Fig. A2.6 Structure diagram September 1992

Nuffield Business and Economics Project: The Course Structure

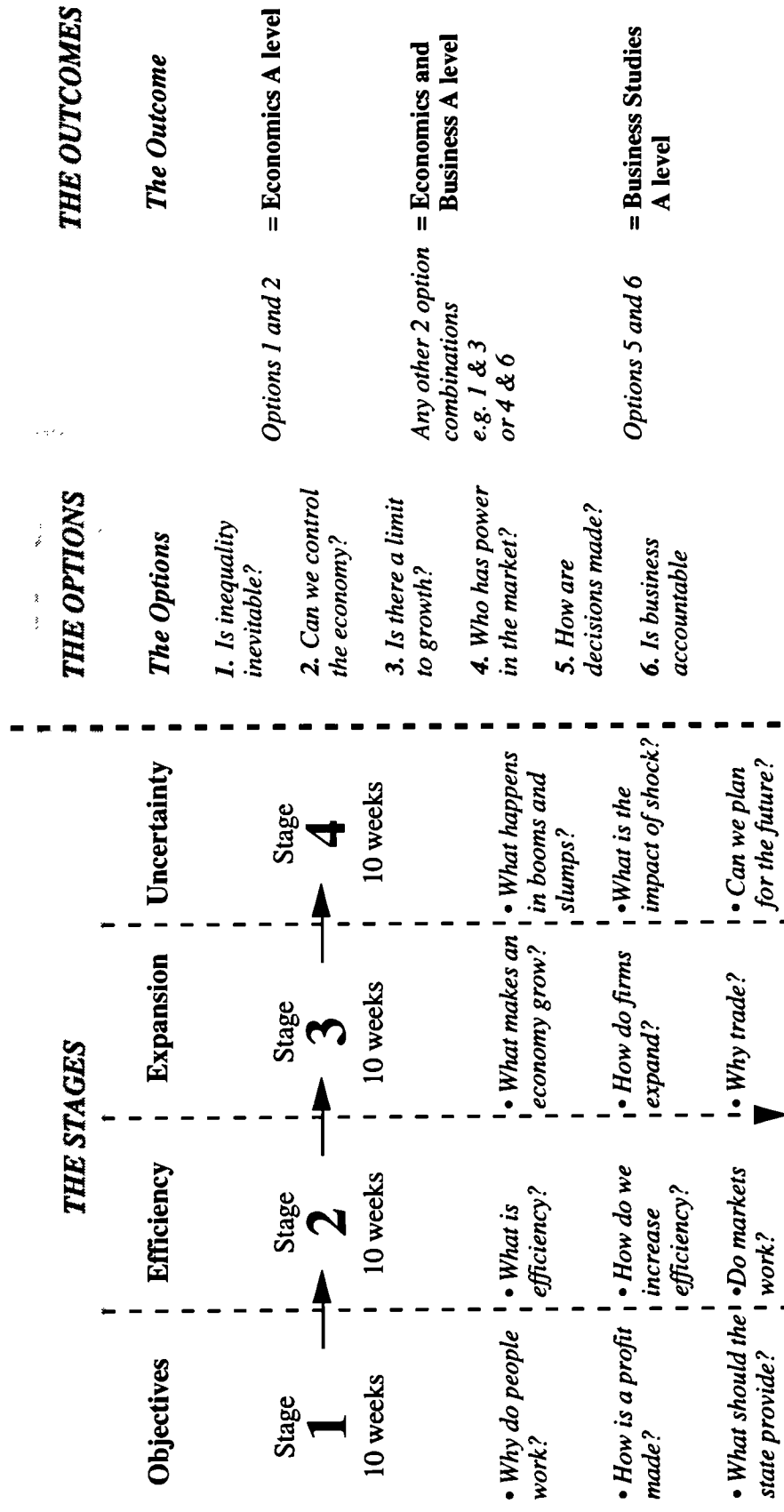


Fig. A2.7 Structure diagram November 1992

A2.9 Text books and Resources

There was no debate as to which publisher would be employed by the Project. Longman had a long and successful association with the Nuffield Foundation, had published many successful text-books in the fields of economics and business studies and were keen to support the Nuffield Economics and Business A-level. As was normal practice, the arrangements over royalty payments were negotiated between the Foundation and Longman, and the Project team members were not involved and nor were they privy to the final outcome of that negotiation.

Throughout much of the Autumn term of 1991 Longman were mainly concerned with publicity. They produced several ideas for logos following a great deal of discussion and a position paper from Stephen Barnes. The team was concerned to avoid clichéd images of men in suits, factories, pound sterling symbols and others so often used on the covers of economics and business studies texts. In the end no specific logo was adopted, although the covers of the books were related. They all used slightly out-of-focus photographs of the end of fibre-optic cables: a fitting image for the next ten years or so. In addition, the contrasting colour of the ampersand joining the words "Economics" and "Business" was also unique. Together these images pleased both the team and Longman, and also solved what had become a rather difficult issue.

Before the Langrish House conference in October 1991, Stephen Barnes offered some ideas about publishing strategies, connected to his idea of "fields of enquiry". He envisaged

"10 book(lets)...Each could become the centre of its own 'resource field'."

He also stated:

"We *might* produce a *core book* but if so it ought, perhaps, to be a kind of 'manual'....Its role would be that of an *enabling device*."

(Barnes, 1991a: 8-9. Emphasis in original)

From this it was possible to detect a potential clash with any commercial publisher, partly because of the sheer number of publications suggested, but also their make-up. Barnes was signalling his opposition to the idea of a core book, which was what Longman wanted and indeed expected to publish. As time passed Barnes somewhat

altered his position on the avoidance of a textbook. He began to refer to "a book of beef", meaning one that would deliver the detailed syllabus content of the course. Although he remained opposed to this in principle, as indeed did I, he recognised that if the Nuffield team did not produce it, someone else certainly would, and this would put the entire project in jeopardy since it carried the risk of transferring the underlying philosophy elsewhere.¹⁰

On 6 February Jenny Wales faxed the team her ideas (Wales, 1992a) about the organic farm which she had researched (see above). As a practical person she was always eager to demonstrate what she meant in principle by means of an example - hence in her fax she referred to a "well trodden road" (line 1). She also mentioned a "Student Handbook". The thrust of the proposal was the question "Do we go organic?", thus making the context central. Wales then referred to the "tool kit" and resources which would together help the students to answer the question. At the end there was a reference to a 'blob' which, as we saw above, was the neutral term for a module title.

For some of us, Jenny Wales' suggestion was carrying the contextual learning process too far. I was concerned, despite Wales' assurances to the contrary, that transferability of knowledge would be lost. The subject of whether or not a farm should go organic was an excellent one in that it not only covered the essential questions of opportunity cost and added value but it also dealt with our 'longitudinal themes' - values, ethics, the environment and so on. Nevertheless, to make each chapter so dependent on one example also carried the risk of becoming out-dated very quickly. I was also concerned because from my experience I believed and still do, that teachers, whilst welcoming examples and contexts at the start of a new course, quickly tire of them and want to create their own.

By 9 March, following a month of protracted negotiations, I wrote a paper using the agreed title "How is a Profit Made?" but offering an alternative, "The Jolly Green Giant Module", to show that I was still essentially in agreement with the organic farm idea, but that we needed to lighten the mood somewhat (Lines, 1992). The suggestion was conventional in the sense that the substantive theory was there, but the principles of investigation and integration were apparent, as well as the use of IT. The farm

¹⁰ Indeed, as a team we were aware that one of the most successful authors of economics and business texts was working within one of our teacher's groups, and therefore had ample opportunity and access to our materials to write a text if we did not. See Barnes' letter to Wales dated 17 March 1992 (Barnes, 1992b) This issue was finally put to rest at the Management Meeting of 13 July 1992 where the minutes show it was agreed: "To obviate the risk of another author publishing books on a joint course, the Nuffield books needed to cover every aspect."

story was, however, subsumed into section C, "The Notion of Profit". It followed a theoretical explanation of revenue and profit, but only after the students had worked out the basic principles through their own investigative efforts.

The following day Barnes produced his ideas for the first Stage, "Why do People Work?" (Barnes, 1992a). In it the 'active learning' theme was strong, but there was no reference to a text. Instead, he wrote about Nuffield Resources and the Portfolio. He also used a heading "hypothesis testing" and referred to "enquiries". This was later picked up and used as an idea for the second year modules.

By 17 March Barnes had refined his ideas still further (Barnes, 1992b). By then Nancy Wall had suggested 'concept panels' which would contain the theory independent of the context. The context or story-line would remain dominant, but to prevent learning of theory becoming over contextualised the theory and practice would be clearly separated. Stephen Barnes' notion of the "Student's Book" in his paper of 17 March was closer to a conventional text than earlier versions, although the book would have contained a great deal more material than was usual, in order to encourage active learning. It can be seen from this proposal that there were a large number of potential publications, including "Nuffield Extras". These would include "short slide sets", "video/audio cassettes", "photographs" and so on, all available through the Project Office. (*ibid.*) This was never a practical idea given the pace at which the team was working, but philosophically it fitted into the ethos of the course.

Much of what Barnes wrote on 17 March was incorporated into publishing proposals that went from the team to Longman on 28 April (Nuffield, 1992b). This was close to the final format, at least in terms of the number and size of the publications. For instance, there was mention of a Resource Pack and photocopyables. The structure of the Student's Book, however, remained contentious. At the Management Committee Meeting on 8 May Brian Willan, the Longman editor, indicated that the proposed length of 320 pages for the book was insufficient, implying that it was not a full-sized text (Nuffield, 1992c). From this there followed a series of meetings, telephone calls and memos between the team, and from the team to Longman and back again. By 5 June issues had come to a head. The team's publishing proposals prompted a response from Brian Willan in which he wrote of a need to "re-think the title, 'Student's Guide'". He did not like the terms "Background Briefings", "Exploration" or the use of icons. He wrote:

"As a matter of principle I think one should avoid using terminology that is potentially confusing and off-putting. I feel an over-use of 'Exploring/Exploration' has a lower secondary rather than an A level feel to it." (Willan, 1992: 1)

Willan was also concerned about the "Nuffield Extras": which he "perceived as 'clutter'" (*ibid.*). As a result of this direct confrontation revised draft publishing proposals were sent by the team, but Longman remained unhappy. A meeting was therefore convened at Longman headquarters in Harlow where, in addition to Brian Willan, his manager Andrew Ransom and Anthony Tomei, then Assistant Director (now Director) of the Nuffield Foundation were also present. Ransom had worked with members of the team before - he had acted as my editor on an earlier book - and we felt he was a sympathetic voice. In addition he had a close working relationship with Tomei.

From the team's point of view the meeting was not a success. The Student's Guide was renamed the Student's Book, which had much more of a textbook feel to it; the notion of boxes to include concepts was questioned; the sample material, according to Longman, used too many questions in the text and not enough statements. There was a feeling in the team both before and after the meeting that anything innovative was constantly under threat and that the publishers would only be happy when they had an entirely conventional, heavyweight (in both senses) text. On the other hand the team had to concede that Longman were making a considerable financial commitment in an uncertain market and had agreed to some innovations such as a Data Book and another containing Photocopiable materials.

At the same time the directors were themselves divided upon the style of the text's writing. Jenny Wales had continued to develop her ideas on contextualised activities which Barnes in particular, did not entirely like. Matters came to a head on 18 June when Wales wrote to Barnes with copies to Wall and myself (Wales, 1992b). The matter at issue concerned the relationship between content and context. Wales wrote:

"A course structure which embodies integration must, by its nature, approach concepts and ideas in a different way. Each unit will have its own internal coherence as certain elements of theory will be developed. The concepts will be developed sequentially but each stage cannot be contiguous. The coherence and integrity of the subjects must therefore come from being able to relate the relevant

sections to each other. They must therefore be clearly identifiable. Boxes facilitate this process as the students simply need to be aware that their contents (the boxes) need to be fully understood in relation to others. As the academic structure is assembled from a range of boxes, the inclusion of skills does not disrupt the thought process.... Once the students have grasped each concept in an applied manner, stage by stage, they are much more likely to be able to appreciate the intellectual beauty of the whole. I feel that your strategy is aiming far above the heads of the majority." (Wales, 1992b: 1. Parenthesis added.)

Barnes's reply (Barnes, 1992c) continued to stress the need for a flexible approach, which he felt was lost under a context driven exposition. He was worried that the course would become "over programmed for both teacher and student." He was concerned about "the possible dating of contexts, examples and allied materials." He recognised the need for the teacher to "recall towards intellectual coherence" and avoid the idea that the course was "purely supported self-study." The "boxes" which Jenny Wales referred to were, for Barnes, ill defined and he was worried that the text might seem "unduly simplistic". In the end his greatest concerns were over flexibility and coherence.

It is clear from the correspondence that relationships were strained, but the debate was having serious consequences as far as timings were concerned. There was a danger of the entire project falling behind. Nancy Wall spelt these out on 25 July (Wall, 1992). She also quoted Anthony Tomei, to whom she had spoken about the disagreement, who said that "blood on the floor is normal" (*ibid.*: 2) in curriculum developments.

On 1 July Ian Marcousé, one of the seconded teachers made an intervention, which once again detailed the challenges faced by learning through concepts:

"Concepts are to be pulled through in the slipstream of the context. This carries the danger of presenting our course as descriptive rather than conceptual. As a GCSE-ish innovation rather than an academic one." (Marcousé, 1992)

He suggested standard sections, which had a feel closer to a conventional text. A similar style was advocated by Nancy Wall in her publication proposal of 9 September. The resources in that paper would be: The Student Book, the Teacher's

Guide which would include photocopiable resources, Six Option Booklets, the Data Book and The Readings. The last of these was an attempt to provide an anthology of newspaper, journal and other articles that the students would find interesting and relevant to support their investigations. At the Management Committee meeting of 28 September the Data Book was called into question by Longman, but the team insisted that it was essential. Similarly challenged, the Readings did not survive because, it was argued, they could easily be incorporated in the Student's Book where they could be placed in the right order and context.

Up to Christmas there was a period of what might be termed uneasy peace between Longman and the team. The structure document as we have seen, was in its final form, but it contained 'questions', indicating the underlying pedagogic ethos. To Longman these questions were highly contentious and the first three months of 1993 revealed just how far apart the two sides were.

At a meeting held on 14 January Brian Willan (Nuffield, 1993a) detailed his concerns. He regarded questions as unhelpful to students and not in line with the accepted role of a textbook, which was to explain fully. He felt that the exemplar material written thus far had confused contexts and concepts, but that the team's writing was not itself consistent on that point.¹¹ Willan also felt there was a confusion between boxes, case studies and text. All told this was an attack on the underlying values of the project, and so it provoked a detailed and unanimous response from the team. This was sent in a letter to Longman under Nancy Wall's name on 22 January (Wall, 1993a). In it there was an acceptance of some of the criticisms, and an agreement to move to greater consistency of approach. As Wall wrote:

"Our proposals reflect our concern to make our resources user-friendly, allied to our commitment to active and investigative learning. In essence, we seek to retain the important principles underlying our work, while improving the quality of their execution in our writing. We recognise that there is a degree of tension between the need to keep the approach active and investigative, and the need to explain everything fully. Obviously the need is for a sensible balance which meets the needs of the student."

(Wall, 1993a: 1)

¹¹ This of course was true: the authors themselves held differing philosophies, as we have seen.

At the Management Meeting held on 1 February 1993 the contents of the letter were discussed. The Minutes show that Longman remained unconvinced:

"Brian was still concerned that the letter did not address all the points and his main worries were that the books would end up as a collection of case studies with theory attached which would not be convincing or general enough to deliver the subject. A balance was needed between concepts and contexts. He pointed out that if the team did not produce the book that the market needed somebody else would." (Nuffield, 1993b: 2)

Nancy Wall's response in the meeting was to suggest to Brian Willan that he look in detail at some of the writing on Stage Three that had been re-worked in line with the letter of 22 January. This was agreed, but it failed to satisfy the publishers, who sent a seven page paper bringing together their criticisms and suggesting a way forward (Longman, 1993). In essence they were unhappy with the single case study approach exemplified by the organic farm, "How is a Profit Made?". They felt this confused context and theory, since it was intermingled. Furthermore where boxes had been introduced in order to separate theory and context, the separation implied by boxing the text did not in fact happen; the boxes had to be read sequentially within the chapter. Longman wanted the boxes to disappear, except where used to define concepts. Pages two and three of the document argued strongly against the use of questions in books. Longman suggested that questions implied that the chapter would answer them. They wrote:

"A lot of people are also likely to be put off by an excess of questions simply on the grounds that the main function of a book is to help equip students to answer questions, not to be presented with the questions themselves as the organising principle." (Longman, 1993: 3)

In criticising the principle of questions, Longman faced the problem that both the structure document (see above) and the syllabus contained them. Their answer was as follows:

"We need to recognise that books and syllabuses have different functions and roles, and from a publishing point of view the

important thing is that we do all we can to make the books work as books." (*ibid.*: 4)

On page five of the document under the heading "General", Longman specified that it was the issue of clarity for the market that was uppermost in their minds. In the first paragraph, they referred to "a students book we are fully confident in" that will "reach as large a section of the market as possible." Point two on the same page stated "the need to present the student material in clear and accessible terms, to enable one to reach as wide a market as we can" and in point three "It provides a central student resource in a form that will satisfy student needs, and does not leave the way open for a competitor to provide this after a short period of time." (*ibid.*: 5)

The final two pages suggested titles that had the questions removed. The result was a text with headings which were clearly identifiable as either economics or business studies; they were also conventional and perhaps even predictable. Such a proposal was therefore fundamentally at odds with the spirit and ethos of the course that the team was trying to create; it would sit at odds with the structure document, and it would not suggest as strong a link with the syllabus as was the original intent. Unsurprisingly, therefore, it prompted a flurry of activity within the team. Jenny Wales faxed a response entitled "The Questions Issues" in which she argued that "The questions reflect the ethos of the course." She then went on to offer a further ten reasons why they should remain (Wales, 1993). She made specific replies to the Longman document. For example on their points 6, 7 and 8 she wrote:

"6/7 'What Makes an Economy Grow?' has a ring to it which makes it memorable. 'Growth in Economies' may be short but it certainly isn't snappy.

8. The ethos of the course is to question and enquire. Questions are therefore more appropriate than statements....which provide no insights into the ethos. Teachers, traditional or avant garde, have always asked their students questions. They will be a shock to no-one." (Wales, 1993: 2)

Nancy Wall detailed a way forward. On 21 February she wrote:

"At the heart of this dispute there is a difference of objectives. We came to the Project intent upon creating a course which would *require* teachers to teach in a different way, i.e. making students

actively involved. I detect in these references to 'textbooks which can be used flexibly' a desire for a book which can be used in traditional ways, should that be the teacher's wish"

(Wall, 1993b: 1. Emphasis in original.)

Wall's assumption that it is possible to *require* teachers to teach in a different way is surely overstating the case; nevertheless it was certainly our intention to put appropriate structures in place to help those who wished to change to do so. A highly conventional text would have allowed an 'escape route' for those teachers, especially the economists whom we particularly wanted to move forward. Her suggestion was for what she called "Position C" which she saw as a middle way. The Student's text was to be "genuinely flexible....by creating opportunities for students to read actively (through the questions), but also by not leaving much to the imagination. In other words we explain properly and fully." She argued that the ethos of the course was to be carried by other means: "We mobilise all of our vehicles for propagating new approaches, including written resources, but also rely on the TG (Teacher's Guide), INSET, IT and publicity generally." (*ibid.*: 1. Parenthesis added)

On 22 February Stephen Barnes wrote to the team offering another approach. He started by spelling out the dilemma:

"Longman seem to want a fairly conventional text that embraces the joint subject....We were deeply influenced by the idea of a 'Student Handbook' - a quite different notion. Longman want a textbook: this must be recognised and faced. They believe that the market will want a textbook too." (Barnes, 1993: 1)

He then moved towards what he called "Strategy 5", which was similar to Wall's 'Version C':

"We maintain credible and exciting contexts throughout the student book. Contexts are in-built and designed to provoke or reveal elements of theoretical substance. But the text would remain above all a cogent body of theory. The contexts would trigger and illuminate. Yet the concepts retain their independent integrity and are totally flexible in application." (*ibid.*: 2)

It was the Teacher's Guide, Barnes argued, which would carry the innovative material:

"....a place to supply a radical and wide-ranging collection of investigations and activities that represent the major pedagogical thrust....Their relationship to the text would be *referential*: the text is a stimulating source for the tools of analysis while the student-centred applications are in the booklets/photocopiables."

(*ibid.* Emphasis in original)

On the 23 February the co-directors met to discuss their position. It was clear to me that whilst members of the team were agreed on the underpinning values of the course and the way they should be delivered through the resources, we were not agreed on the detail. This was undermining our position with Longman, who were by now explicit in their desire for a fairly conventional text, but one that would nevertheless be innovative enough to capture a substantial market share. We therefore had to reach a consensus. The result was a lengthy and tiring meeting, but one that broke much of the deadlock. I was able to make a contribution, generously acknowledged by Nancy Wall in a fax dated 24 February (Wall, 1993c), 'simply' by reversing the concept/context boxes. Concepts would appear in the text, whilst case studies would be in tinted boxes. Further concessions were made within the team. The single context approach, such as the organic farm, was dropped in favour of a number of contexts and examples, but it was recognised that a single theme might be appropriate on occasions. Finally there was an explicit acceptance that the student's book would have less importance in changing the teaching of the subjects. As Wall wrote, "We are placing less emphasis on the Student Book as a vehicle for innovation in teaching methods." (Wall, 1993d: 2) Despite these concessions, as we saw above and in chapter five, the team remained committed to the notion of questions, and argued vigorously for their continued inclusion.

The outcome of this work was the "Advice for Authors" document issued on 31 March (Nuffield, 1993). This recognised the need for the Student's Book to be self contained and relevant in terms of content, but which also allowed teachers to develop their own contexts. A compromise was reached on the issue of questions. Each of the Stages would have a title: Objectives, Efficiency, Expansion and Uncertainty, but beneath each one the questions would remain. At the end of every Stage a case study would be written which pulled together the previous efforts. The content would sit firmly within the text with examples and contexts in boxes as appropriate.

A great deal of responsibility for the ethos of the course was transferred to the Teacher's Guide, the Photocopiables - named "Activity Copymasters" in order to emphasise their role - and to the Data Book. In addition, the team was determined to ensure that the option books would carry forward the investigative ethos in an innovative and creative way, as was detailed in chapter five. So, in a very real sense, the battles which were perhaps lost over the Student's Book were won in the options, although significantly the questions that drove the options were reduced to sub headings beneath the main titles on the covers. For example, *Poverty and Wealth* is the title on the cover of the first option book, with the question underneath: "Is Inequality Inevitable?"

Overall, planning and writing the resources was both exhausting and stressful and the results were somewhat disappointing, as we saw in chapter five. Nevertheless many lessons were learnt and these were carried forward to the Nuffield/BP Business and Economics GCSE that followed the A-level Project in 1995.

A2.10 References

Abbs, P. (1987) "Towards a Coherent Arts Aesthetic" in Abbs, P. (Ed.) *Living Powers: The Arts in Education*, London: Falmer Press.

Barnes, S. (1991a) *Why Does the Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project Need a Debate about Fundamental Issues?* Paper presented at Langrish House Hampshire, 5 October.

Barnes, S. (1991b) *A is for Alienation, Art and A level*, Paper presented at Langrish House, Hampshire, 5 October.

Barnes, S., (1992a) *Why do People Work* Internal document circulated to Nuffield team. 10 March.

Barnes, S., (1992b) *Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project* Letter from Stephen Barnes to Jenny Wales. 17 March.

Barnes, S., (1992c) Letter from Stephen Barnes to Jenny Wales. 22 June.

Barnes, S., (1993) *Published Materials. Reshaping Issues. A response to Longman's comments* Paper circulated to team 22 February

Hurd, S. J. (1995) "Third National Survey of Computer Use in Economics and Business Education 1995" in *Economics and Business Education*, Vol. 3: No. 4, Winter.

Leonard, C., and Vidler, C. (1990) "Wessex Modular Business/Economics" in *Economics*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4, Winter.

Lines, D., (1992) *How is a Profit Made or The Jolly Green Giant Module* Internal document circulated to Nuffield team. 9 March.

Longman (1993) *Nuffield Economics and Business Studies: Trial Material* Memorandum to Project Team. February

Marcousé, I., (1992) *Thought on the Student Handbook* Comments left with Barnes 1 July, circulated by fax 11 June

Marcousé, I., and Lines, D. (1990) *Business Case Studies*, Harlow: Longman.

McKenzie, L (1991) Letter to Nuffield team. 18 November.

Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project (1992c) *Minutes of Management Committee Meeting* 8 May

Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project (1992d) *Minutes of Management Committee Meeting* 14 May

Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project (1993a) *Minutes of Management Committee Meeting* 14 Jan.

Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project (1993b) *Minutes of Management Committee Meeting* 1 February

Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project (1992a) *Newsletter 1* published by Longman. March.

Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project (1992b) *Publishing Proposals*
Document sent from the Nuffield team to Longman 28 April

Parsons, C., and Cain, J. (1989) *Investigating Business*, Harlow: Longman.

(ULSEB) University of London School Examinations Board (Undated) *Modular Syllabus (Mode 2 Ridgeway) Economics. Syllabus and Specimen Material*, ULSEB.

Wall, N., (1991) *How it works* Internal document circulated to Nuffield team.
December.

Wall, N., (1992) *Some Thoughts on the Timetable and Commissioning* Memo to the team. 25 June

Wall N., (1993a) Letter to Brian Willan 22 January

Wall, N., (1993b) *Planning Our Writing Strategies* Fax to team members 21 February

Wall, N., (1993c) Fax to David Lines 24 February

Wall, N., (1993d) *Responding to Brian* Draft response circulated to team 24 February

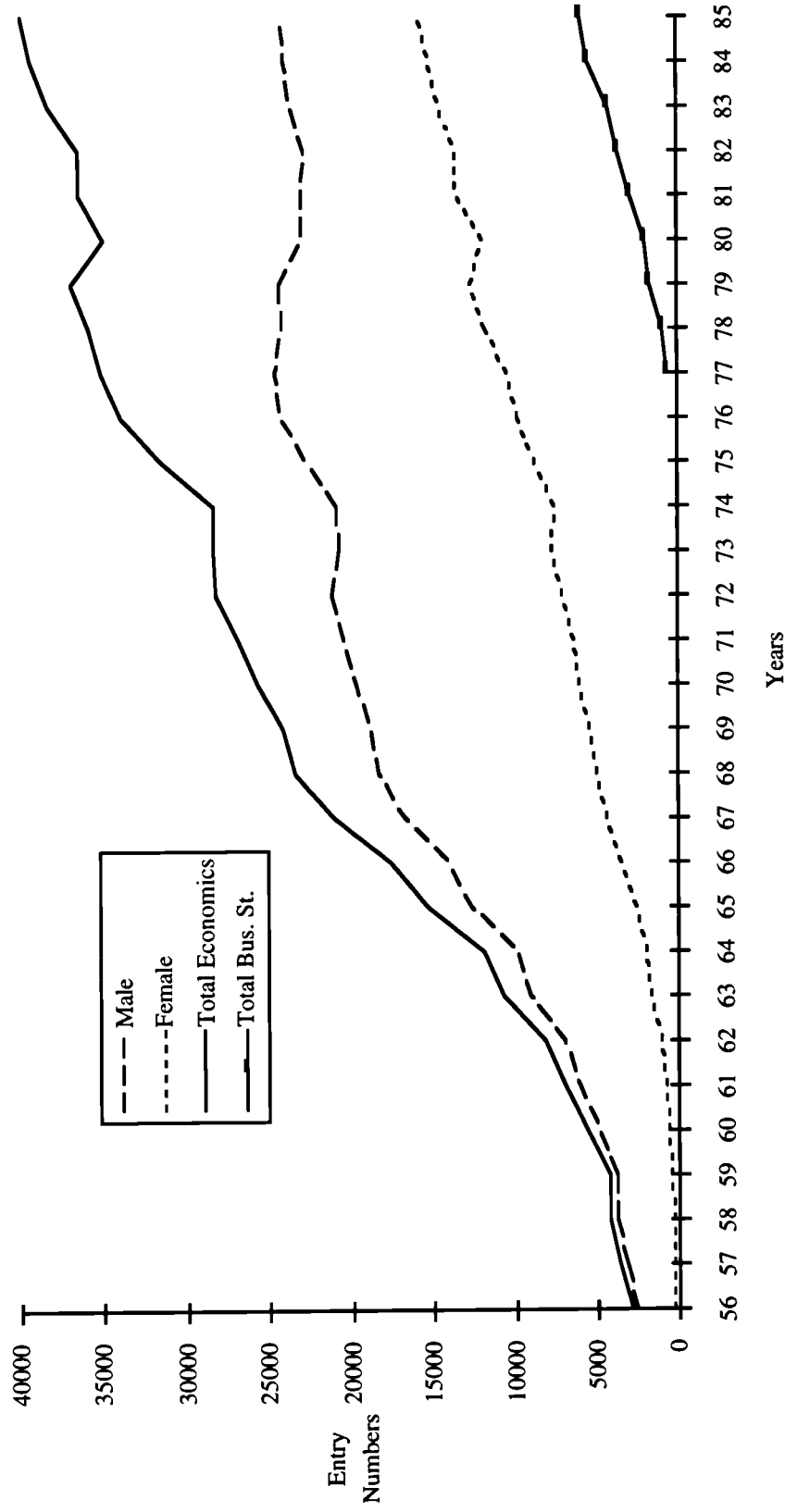
Wales, J., (1992a) *Strategy for Student Handbook* Internal document. 6 February

Wales, J., (1992b) Letter to Stephen Barnes. 18 June

Wales, J., (1993) *The Questions Issues* Fax to team

Willan, B. (1992) *Nuffield Economics and Business Studies Project: Publishing proposals* Fax to team 5 June.

Appendix 3:
GCE A-level Economics and Business Studies entries 1956 - 1985



Source: (DES) Department for Education and Science *Statistics of Education HMSO*

The data show that in the early years there were relatively few female candidates, but unlike their male counterparts their numbers grew at a fairly constant rate. Indeed, from around the mid-1970s any overall increase was only achieved as a result of more females entering the examination.

